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'BEST FEELING OF MY LIFE'

Eden Prairie's Ryan Maenke tags out Ben Hudspeth of Tupelo, Miss., Post 49 during his attempt to steal third base during the 2011 American Legion Baseball World Series in Shelby, N.C., on Aug. 16. Eden Prairie, Minn., defeated Tupelo 5-4 to win the championship game. "This is the best feeling of my life," declared first baseman Tyler Peterson, who made the winning run. Shelby is the permanent home of the Legion World Series, and by the end of the five-day tournament claimed an attendance record of nearly 86,000. **Story on Page 52** James V. Carroll



The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.4 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 14,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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Tom Hill
CGA STAFF WRITER

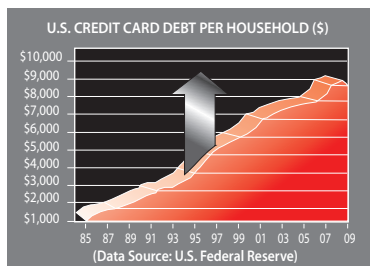
Every three minutes another person falls behind on credit card debt. It's no wonder, since every major credit card company has nearly doubled the minimum monthly payment on consumers' bills. Federal Regulators forced the change because of their concern about the growing mountain of consumer debt, which stands at \$2.17 trillion. Many consumers can only pay the minimum payment, which can take up to 30 years to pay off. Now, relief is in sight for millions of Americans.

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'A World Worth Saving'

Thank you for Alan W. Dowd's story on the very important alliance between our great nation and Great Britain (August).

I also appreciated the reference to USS *Potomac*, Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidential yacht, and the part it played in the Atlantic Conference. I've been involved as a volunteer on this wonderful ship for almost 15 years, and as senior lead docent – along with more than 110 fellow volunteers – I strive to teach the students of San Francisco Bay-area schools something they will never see in history books. We take whole classes out on the bay, talking about points of interest that have a connection with Roosevelt. We do this at no charge, and help defray expenses by sailing out on two- to three-hour history cruises for the general public, charging a nominal fee.

– Bill Hodges, Oakland, Calif.

Yes, the world is most definitely a better place because of the Atlantic Charter. However, while reading this article, I couldn't help but think of what would have happened if the United States and Great Britain had held France's feet to the fire with regard to its postwar reoccupation of Vietnam. We may still have lost 60,000 precious lives cleaning up its mess. Then again, maybe not.

– Roger Perez Jr., Sulphur, La.

Alan W. Dowd's article left out one important thing. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill ignored the ideals of the Atlantic Charter at Yalta in 1945, when they gave their approval for Stalin's annexation of almost half of Poland and their recognition of the puppet communist government set up there by the Soviets. In 1939, the British and French went to war to defend Poland, but by 1945 it was a country no longer worth fighting for. This was after the British and Americans knew that the Russians had executed



15,000 Polish POWs in the Katyn Forest in 1940 and deported their families to Siberia. The Polish soldiers – including my father, who fought in Monte Cassino, Arnhem, Tobruk, the Falaise Gap, the Battle of Britain and more – learned this lesson well, but continued to do their duty as allies.

Sen. Barbara Mikulski has told the story of her mother, who during World War II had a picture of Roosevelt hanging on the wall. After Yalta, the picture came down. The ideals of the Atlantic Charter were one thing; fighting for them was something else.

– Mikle Swidwinski, Casnovia, Mich.

Lou Diamond Phillips

I enjoyed the interview by Craig Roberts (August). I was assigned to Cubi Point Naval Air Station in the Philippines from 1971 to 1974 with Lou's stepfather, George. I spent time with him and his wife, Lucy, and I remember a well-mannered youngster named Lou.

– Don Bankson, Louisville, Ky.

'Brown Water Bungle'

I served as a postal clerk aboard USS *Mazama* in 1969. During that cruise, we entered Da Nang Harbor to offload parachute flares. I kept a personal diary listing every ship we rearmed on that cruise, and the Da Nang visit is documented.

Recently, a shipmate asked via a social network if anyone on that cruise remembered the exact date we were anchored in Da Nang. He was documenting a disability claim based on his exposure to Agent Orange. I forwarded him a copy of my log page, showing the date. Needless to say, he was overjoyed that I was able to save him a considerable expense.

— David W. Rumpelton, Ramsey, N.J.

Medicare overhaul

I was disappointed, but not shocked, to see the great difference between the positions of Rep. Allyson Schwartz and Rep. Paul Ryan (Big Issues, August). Ryan is looking to make adjustments to save Medicare, which if left unchanged will become bankrupt. Schwartz is working on getting re-elected, appealing to those not aware of the train wreck in the distance.

She claims that the Ryan plan threatens seniors' freedom to see the doctor of their choice when, in fact, more doctors are opting out of the Medicare system. That pool will get a lot smaller if changes aren't made, making it more difficult to find a doctor. A family would make changes if their plans were flawed. The government must do likewise.

— J. Neill Wilkerson, Center Point, Texas

Social Security, Medicare and veterans benefits are entitlements, bought and paid for by their recipients. Welfare, food stamps and free housing are handouts, to which the recipients are not entitled but are provided free of charge by those same people whose benefits Ryan proposes to cut. Those who have lived off the largesse of hard-working Americans should get a job. Those in Congress who looted our entitlement trust funds for pet projects should join Bernie Madoff in prison.

— John W. Sawyer III, Fort Myers, Fla.

After the military, I went to college and got my degree. I entered the work force at 40, and worked hard for 17 years until I was forced to leave due to health issues. I didn't qualify for retirement or medical insurance, since as an engineer I didn't work long enough for any company. I completely rely on VA and Medicare, since my conditions make me ineligible for any other kind of insurance.

What are we to do if Medicare and the VA system are no longer available? Do they propose that we just die and get out of the way? Vouchers will never work if insurance companies refuse me due to my health issues. My wife is a cancer survivor. Without CHAMPVA, she would be dead.

— Timothy A. Nichols, Mountain Home, Ark.

It is disappointing to see Rep. Schwartz offer no solution to the impending Medicare crisis. Backing the status quo may seem like a safe electoral position, but it is not realistic.

The quickest way to destroy Medicare is to do nothing. Rep. Ryan proposes a fair and reasonable approach that gives Medicare a chance to survive.

— Jim Corkins, Williamstown, Mass.

Arlington oversight

I witnessed many of the problems described by Tom Philpott (Veterans Update, August) while serving at Arlington from 1964 to 1966, first as a firing-party squad leader for daily funerals, then as relief commander at the Tomb of the Unknowns. It is nice to know somebody is doing something to correct errors committed there.

— James S. Harden, Calimesa, Calif.

VA and women's health

I read Dr. Joel Kupersmith's article (Living Well, August). I am 63, with more than 16 years in the Air Force. I first received a disability rating of 50 percent in 1987. Women did not even have rights at VA hospitals in 1987, and we received only minimal information. Fortunately, I have had good health insurance and have not relied on VA.

Over the past year, I have tried to have my disability rating re-evaluated, as my condition has worsened with age. I have jumped through every hoop. I am still meeting with doctors who mistake an anti-inflammatory for an antidepressant, and who belittle and threaten when a certain treatment is not conducive to what they think is right.

When I experience action, maybe I will again believe in VA and its care of women.

— Wanda K. Forest, Peoria, Ariz.

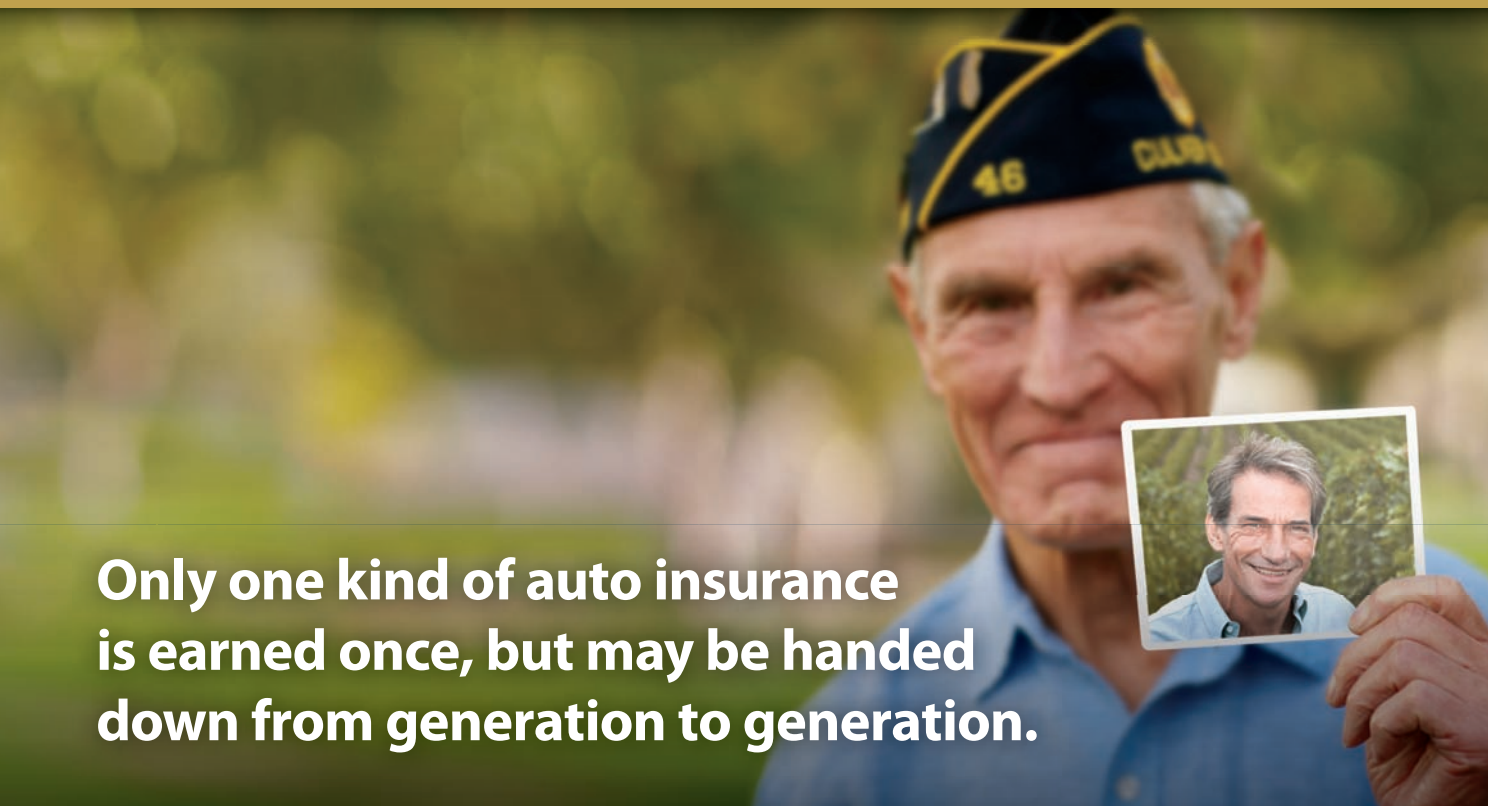
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Immediate pullout from Afghanistan



SUPPORT

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif.

■ Rohrabacher is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Afghanistan was a necessary campaign but not a necessary war. The United States rightfully retaliated for the 9/11 attacks planned in Afghanistan by Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida, operating under Taliban protection. A small contingent of U.S. Special Forces – numbering in the hundreds, not thousands – worked with the Northern Alliance to drive most of the terrorists from the country. However, they were able to find a sanctuary in Pakistan's frontier areas.

Like the special operatives who killed bin Laden in Abbottabad earlier this year, the drone attacks into Pakistan's frontier provinces are part of the anti-terrorism campaign started in 2001. Since 2004, the drones have taken out over 2,400 militants. Unfortunately, behind these successful, cost-effective tactics, U.S. leaders made the strategic mistake of embarking on a massive nation-building effort that put us on a war footing. The flawed notion centered on the premise that Afghanistan had to be transformed, so that it would no longer be a haven for terrorists.

Afghanistan is in the middle of an arc of chaos, extending from Central Asia through the Middle East into Africa. We cannot possibly wage Afghanistan-scale wars in dozens of countries. We cannot even afford to expand the Afghan war into the Pakistani sanctuaries with the kind of ground invasion needed to clear out this lawless region.

After 10 years and \$500 billion, Afghanistan will likely fall back into civil war as soon as U.S. troops leave. Nation-building in a land of tribes and warlords, with no cultural tradition of central authority, was a fool's errand. The United States needs to leave and change its strategy immediately. We should hit the enemy wherever we find them, and let them claw their own way out of the rubble.



OPPOSE

Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C.

■ Clyburn is assistant minority leader of the House of Representatives.

I proudly represent a state and a congressional district with proud military traditions.

Fort Jackson is an important training ground for new Army recruits, and new Marine recruits are being trained at Parris Island near Beaufort, also home to a Marine Corps air station. Charleston is home to Air Force and Coast Guard bases, and nearby Goose Creek has a naval weapons station. Shaw Air Force Base was established near my hometown of Sumter in 1941, and earlier

this year it became home to the 3rd Army. And McEntire Air National Guard Base in Eastover is home to the 169th Fighter Wing.

Hundreds of South Carolinians are currently serving in defense of our nation. Twenty-eight have paid the ultimate price in Afghanistan. The most recent was Gunnery Sgt. Ralph "E.J." Pate Jr., a 29-year-old native of Mullins, in my district. Pate was on his seventh deployment in 13 years.

The tide began turning in Afghanistan after President Obama ordered a surge of 33,000 troops in 2009. All Americans rejoiced at the news that Osama bin Laden had been eliminated by U.S. forces, and one of the leaders of that highly successful mission is one of my constituents.

In June, the president announced that our troops will begin returning home. By year's end, 10,000 will end their tours, and by the end of 2012 all the surge troops will have left. These withdrawals anticipate transferring all security responsibilities to the Afghans by the end of 2014.

Our military and their families have paid some high prices during this decade-long war, and we honor their sacrifices. It is my fervent hope that we will soon have the joyous task of celebrating their service by welcoming all of them home.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Some members of Congress want an immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, calling the war too costly and futile. President Obama announced a phased withdrawal, with 10,000 troops leaving this year.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

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Is my exercise program working?

BY MARK FUERST

Raking leaves, taking a brisk walk around the block, and walking up stairs instead of riding an elevator can be as effective as a structured exercise program in improving your physical activity, heart health and blood pressure.

This is particularly good news if you are mostly sedentary and lack the time for or access to a health club or gym, or if you simply dislike vigorous exercise. But once you do get started, how do you know that the exercise is working?

The early clues are psychological – you will feel satisfied and gratified because you have taken control of your health, and will feel better about yourself. Beyond that, you will start to feel better physically, according to Steven Jonas, professor of preventive medicine at the School of Medicine of the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Here are a few ways to check how well you are doing:

- Walk up a flight of stairs. If you no longer huff and puff, you know that your body is responding.

- Walk a six-block loop in your neighborhood and see how long it takes.

As you do it regularly, look to improve your time by 10 percent, then 20 percent. When you're going as fast as you can, don't push the pace. Just lengthen the time little by little. Newly released exercise guidelines from the American College of Sports Medicine suggest 30 to 60 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise (such as brisk walking) five days a week.

- Check your heart rate after walking for 10 minutes.

After two to four weeks, your exercising heart rate should be lower. This is the training effect, and shows that your heart is toned and pumping more blood with each stroke.

CONDITIONING THE HEART

You need to know two basic terms if you are conditioning your heart: predicted maximum heart rate and training range. The predicted maximum heart rate is the highest safe number of beats per minute during any one exercise period. You can calculate this rate with a simple formula: 220 minus your age.

As you exercise, you must bring your heart rate into the training range, which is 75 to 80 percent of the maximum. This is the rate that best conditions the heart. So a 60-year-old with a predicted maximum heart rate of 160 would have a training range of 120 to 128 beats per minute.

To monitor your heart rate, you can use a heart-rate monitor that you wear on your wrist, or you can simply time your pulse. The easiest place to take your pulse during exercise is at the side of the throat, where the carotid artery beats forcefully.

Place your index and middle fingers at the base of the neck on either side of the windpipe, and count your heartbeats for 10 seconds. Multiply this number by six. This tells you the number of heartbeats per minute. Then you can check whether this heart rate falls within your training range.

Mark Fuerst is a Brooklyn-based health and medical writer.



Media Bakery

THE TWO-SEAT 'HOT ZONE'

If you skip flying for fear you'll catch a cold or the flu from other passengers, there's good news. You have to sit quite near a sick person to have an increased likelihood of becoming ill. Australian scientists examined the spread of the H1N1 virus among international passengers in 2009. When a sick person sat two seats in front, behind, or on either side of a healthy passenger, there was a 7.7-percent increased risk that the passenger would become ill. This "hot zone" – where germs spread more easily – was smaller than expected. Still, it's a good idea to take precautions:

- Change seats or wear a mask if you find yourself sitting next to someone who is coughing or sneezing.

- Wash your hands often, and avoid touching your face. You may have picked up germs from touching seat backs or door handles.



Media Bakery

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

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Media Bakery

Is your java habit harming your health?

Americans love coffee – we drink an estimated 400 million cups per day, making the United States the biggest coffee consumer in the world. This figure is likely to keep growing – home consumption is rising, and the coffee-shop sector is enjoying annual growth of 7 percent.

While one or two cups of coffee a day is unlikely to do any harm, too much can cause problems. Recent research points to the positive health effects of moderate coffee-drinking, but it's common knowledge that excessive consumption of anything is bad news for the body.

How much coffee is too much? Most experts agree that a person consuming less than 350 mg of caffeine per day should not suffer any adverse effects – this equates to around three 8-oz. cups of brewed coffee. However, any more and your health could start to suffer.

If you are drinking 10 or more cups of coffee a day and struggle to cut down, then you could be addicted to caffeine – a condition known as caffeinism. A dependence on caffeine can lead to a variety of other health problems, including increased heart rate and blood pressure, restlessness, nervousness, insomnia, stomach pain, nausea and vomiting.

So, if you are drinking too much coffee, how can you beat the bean and cut down?

Get some exercise. Many people rely on coffee to wake them up in

the morning – the caffeine in the drink stimulates the central nervous system, causing you to feel more awake and able to cope with the day ahead. Exercise produces a similar effect by increasing blood flow, which makes you feel energized, refreshed and alert. Your body will certainly thank you if you switch your early-morning cup of coffee for an early-morning run.

Switch to tea. Tea still contains caffeine, but a cup of black tea has about half the amount in a similar-sized cup of coffee. Green tea and white tea are even better options.

Try decaf. For many people, decaffeinated coffee simply defeats the purpose. But if you want to enjoy the taste without the active ingredient, it's a great alternative. Switching some of your daily coffee intake to decaf is also a great way of cutting consumption.

Go cold turkey. If you simply can't cut down on your coffee intake no matter how hard you try, you are most likely addicted to caffeine. If you feel that this is having a negative effect on your health, there may be no option but for you to kick the habit entirely, just as someone quitting smoking would do with cigarettes. It's not going to be easy – caffeine withdrawal can lead to symptoms such as headaches, nausea, insomnia, fatigue and mild depression – but after a week or two, you'll see start to see some improvement.

Worms, yeast, and the final frontier

For three decades, VA has sent worms, yeast and other minute living organisms into space aboard NASA shuttles. How these tiny passengers react in the special conditions afforded by weightlessness has enabled VA researchers to better understand bone growth, immunity, and genetics, as well as to expedite the development of new vaccines.

Some highlights of VA's collaboration with NASA:

- VA has sent research payloads on 15 of the past 16 shuttle missions.
- NASA's final shuttle mission, aboard *Atlantis*, included a VA research project comprised of genetically engineered yeast cells. Led by the Durham VA Medical Center in North Carolina, the purpose of the Micro-4 project is to examine the role of genetics with regard to the growth and reproduction of microbes.
- On board *Endeavour's* final journey in June were vaccines for two common infections: salmonella, and

an antibiotic-resistant form of golden staph, the most common bacterial agent in infections among deployed troops.

- VA researcher Millie Hughes-Fulford of the San Francisco VA Medical Center participated in the first Spacelab mission in 1983. Her subsequent research studies have flown aboard other shuttle missions.

NASA/Bill Ingalls



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Last changes to Post-9/11 GI Bill kick in

BY TOM PHILPOTT

Veterans and servicemembers eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill can now use their education benefits for all sorts of non-degree skill-training programs, including paid apprenticeships.

“That’s a significant expansion” in training options, said Keith Wilson, director of education services for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The last of the Post-9/11 GI Bill reforms signed into law by President Obama last January take effect Oct. 1. These allow the benefit to cover most education and training programs, including correspondence courses, on-the-job training, and flight school (other than simply to gain a private pilot’s license).

The reforms make the benefit less complex, principally by establishing a single cap of \$17,500 per year on basic education benefits payable to private colleges and universities. The cap will be raised annually based on increases in the cost of education nationwide. It replaces a separate cap for every state-based tuition-and-fees charged by the most expensive state-run university.

As a result, up to 6,000 students attending private colleges in seven states had faced a drop in GI Bill payments. But the Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act of 2011, signed in August, will allow them to receive payments equal to the most expensive state-run school until 2014, when presumably the last of them will have completed their degrees.

Changes kicking in this month include:

- National Guard members called to active duty under Title 32 to organize, administer, recruit, instruct or train the National Guard, or to respond to a national emergency under section 502(f), are now eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Benefits can be paid retroactively for college enrollment back to the law’s Aug. 1, 2009, start date. This closes an eligibility gap that Congress never intended.
- A stipend of up to \$1,000 a year to cover the cost of books and supplies is now available to active-duty servicemembers using the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The stipend had been payable only to veterans who were students and not on active duty.

- The monthly Post-9/11 GI Bill housing allowance had been available only to resident students. That now extends to students taking online courses or distance learning. The maximum allowance will be one-half the national average for Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for pay grade E-5 with dependents. So the full-time rate for distance learners at the 100-percent eligibility tier is

\$673.50 per month for 2011. Students on active duty do not qualify, because they either already draw BAH or live in base housing.

Effective Aug. 1, these key changes occurred:

- The revised law prorates the allowance based on “rate of pursuit,” using a formula that rounds to the nearest 10-percent multiple. So if a veteran is taking nine credits, and 12 is considered full-time at the school, the rate of pursuit is 0.75, so the veteran will receive 80 percent of local BAH. If taking 10 cred-

its and 12 credits is full-time, the rate of pursuit is 0.83 and, again, the allowance will be 80 percent of local BAH.

- Semester breaks will no longer use up education benefits and housing allowances that students expected to have available later in order to complete studies or for future enrollment.

- Veterans eligible for both Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits can now choose to receive an amount equal to the Post-9/11 GI Bill monthly housing allowance, instead of the Chapter 31 subsistence allowance.

Tom Philpott, a former Coast Guardsman, has written about veterans and military personnel issues for more than 30 years.



Media Bakery

For more information on the Post-9/11 GI Bill:

📞 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551), weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CST

🌐 www.gibill.va.gov

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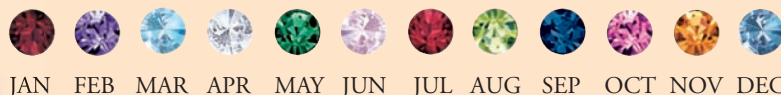
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'A Commander for Everybody'

New York's Fang Wong assumes leadership of the Legion.

BY MATT GRILLS

Standing in Lower Manhattan's Kimlau Square, in the shadow of a memorial arch honoring U.S. veterans of Chinese ancestry, Fang Wong pulls a small box out of his suit pocket.

"This is how it all got started," he says, smiling. "This is what put me and the Legion together."

Inside the box is an American Legion School Award medal, presented to him nearly 50 years ago by Lt. B.R. Kimlau Post 1291 in Chinatown. Along with the medal, he received an envelope containing \$15, enough to cover his next semester at Chinese Public School.

The gift "impressed the heck out of me," says Wong, who at 12 years old moved to New York City from Hong Kong with his family.

"I traveled from the other side of the world to go to school here, and you figure your job is to do your best, to study, to give 100 percent. And there are people who are willing to take the time to say 'thank you' and recognize you and reward you.

"I thought, 'I don't know who this is, but I like the way they do this kind of thing. If there's a way, I'd like to be associated with that organization.'"

He succeeded, to say the least. Last month, at the 93rd National Convention in Minneapolis, Legionnaires elected Wong national commander.

He puts on the red cap after two decades of serving The American Legion at every level – post, district, county, state and national. On 9/11, Wong was adjutant of the Kimlau post, just a few blocks from the World Trade Center. Following the attacks, he helped direct relief efforts as food, money and clothes poured in.

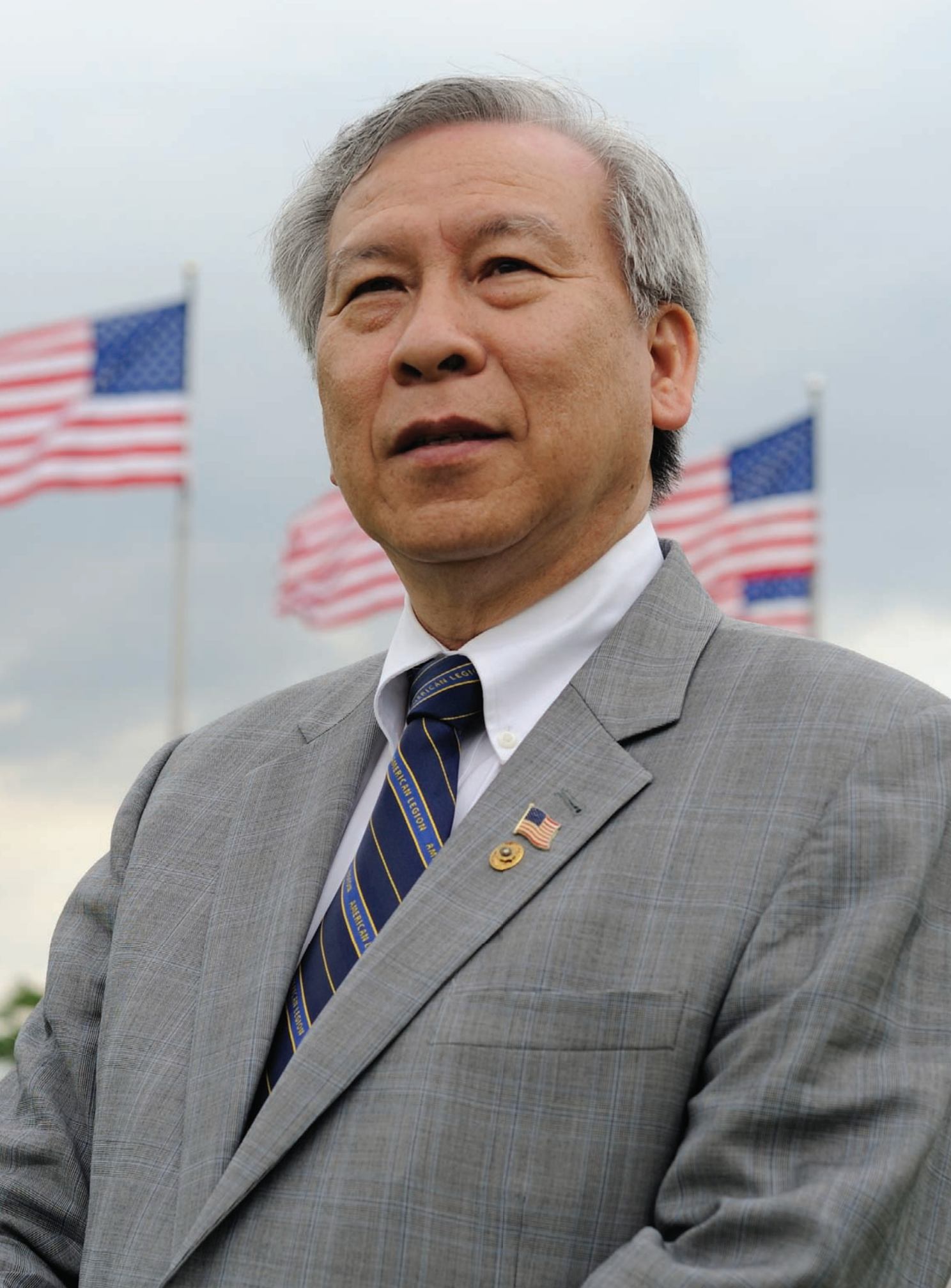
In 2002, Wong became department commander of New York, and was later tapped to serve as a national vice commander.

"I've known Fang for 20 years, and he's shown great dedication to the Legion," says Dick Pedro, New York's department adjutant. "He has a zeal for this job. A year from now, we'll be pleased to see what he's accomplished for veterans and their families."

Citizen and Soldier. Wong was born in Canton, China, in 1948, a year before the communist takeover. His father, Seedor, had just moved back to the United States, where he'd worked at a vegetable farm on Long Island during World War II.

The rest of the family – Wong, and his mother, grandmother and brother – got permission to leave China, and went to Hong Kong. Nine years passed before they received visas, and in 1960, they were finally reunited with Seedor.

Amr C. Elliott





Wong and his wife, Barbara, met through a mutual friend after he returned from Vietnam. They married in 1976. Amy C. Elliott

“The whole world wanted to come to the United States,” Wong says. “You heard nothing but the greatest. We called America ‘Gam Saan,’ which means ‘gold mountain.’”

Wong met his father for the first time at New York International Airport, after three days and nights of traveling. “My mom said, ‘Say hello to your father,’” he remembers. “I don’t recall too much of anything else. I was tired and hungry.”

He and his brother stayed with a family friend until their father built a second level behind the laundry he operated. A student in Harlem, he found that he was “a minority in a minority.” The only other Chinese boy at Junior High School 139 was named Eugene. He was a year older than Wong, and had been bullied. But he had become “the Bruce Lee of that era, practicing martial arts in the back of his father’s grocery store,” Wong says. “The next year, I arrive, and all of a sudden there’s two of us. He had scared off everybody, and told them, ‘That’s my cousin.’ Nobody bothered me. I had it made.”

In 1963, Wong became a naturalized citizen of the United States. Still, he talked his father into letting him keep up his Chinese studies. He got out of class every day at 3, jumped on the D train at 145th Street, shot straight down to Chinatown, and spent a couple of hours at Chinese school. He made it back to his father’s store at 8 or even 9 at night, did his homework and went to bed.

As he got older, Wong never forgot that Legionnaire from Kimlau Post 1291 – the man who had come to his school, shook his hand, congratulated him on his academic achievements, and encouraged him to keep working hard.

“Over the years, I start learning more,” he says. “It’s something called The American Legion, and the Legion is soldiers. I figure one of the first things I need to do is be a soldier. So when the time comes, I join the Army.”

At Home in the Army. Like so many other military careers, Wong’s started with a draft notice. At the time, he was finishing his first semester of college, taking night classes. A retired master sergeant advised him to volunteer so he could choose his field. “I said, ‘What the heck?’ I wanted to qualify for the Legion anyway,” he says. Offered MP or personnel, he went with personnel.

Wong ended up in Europe, but only for a few months. Between homesickness and the worst winter Germany had had in years, he started looking for a way out – “stupid of me, of course,” he admits. “The only way I could get out was by volunteering to go to Vietnam.”

Nevertheless, he went, and Wong liked the job so much that he extended his Vietnam tour twice. He supported a military intelligence unit, and when a Chinese linguist was needed, Wong was one of two guys who fit the bill. “I wound up working with the field agents, helping them translate reports, interpret, stuff like that,” he says. “It was interesting, and I thought it was worthy.”

Wong returned to the United States in 1972, thinking he’d separate from the service. But he found that he enjoyed the discipline and the security of Army life. At Fort Monmouth, N.J., he felt protected from antiwar expression. “I was surrounded by gates, shielded from the outside world. On weekends, I’d hop on a bus, take it to Chinatown, and be back with my friends. I was spared from being harassed, yelled at, spit on.”

On one of those weekend trips home, he met the woman he’d marry, Barbara Lam. Like Wong, she immigrated to the United States with her family when she was 12. They’ve been together 35 years and have one son, Eric, who’s a talented piano player and composer.



As a boy, Wong received a school award medal from Lt. B.R. Kimlau Post 1291, where he’s now a member. Amy C. Elliott

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You might be aware that cholesterol is made in the liver. But did you know approximately 75% of all drugs processed in the body share a common metabolic pathway in the liver? When drugs that share this pathway are taken together or with other drugs that affect this pathway, a drug interaction may occur.

LIVALO® (pitavastatin) reduces your cholesterol, but it's not dependent on this pathway in order to be processed. Why is this important? Because knowing how drugs are processed in the body may help avoid certain interactions.

To learn more about potential drug interactions that may occur with LIVALO or other medications, talk to your doctor and ask whether LIVALO may be right for you.

What is LIVALO?

• LIVALO is a prescription medicine that, along with diet, has been approved for the treatment of high cholesterol.

Drug Interactions with LIVALO

- If you are taking cyclosporine, you should not take LIVALO.
- Caution should be taken when using LIVALO in combination with other cholesterol drugs like niacin and fibrates, as this may increase your risk of serious muscle problems.
- Some drugs, like erythromycin and rifampin, may lead to drug interactions requiring a lower maximum daily dose of LIVALO, when used in combination.

Important Safety Information about LIVALO

Who should NOT take LIVALO?

LIVALO is not right for everyone, including:

- Those who have had an allergic reaction to LIVALO
- Anyone with liver disease
- Patients with severe kidney disease not on hemodialysis
- Women who are nursing, pregnant, or who may become pregnant
- Anyone currently taking cyclosporine

What should I talk to my doctor about?

- If you take LIVALO, tell your doctor right away if you experience any unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness, particularly if accompanied by fever or a general feeling of discomfort. This could be a sign of a rare but serious side effect.
- Your doctor should do blood tests to monitor your liver function before starting LIVALO, and then at 12 weeks following the start of LIVALO, after any increase in dose, and periodically (e.g., every 6 months) thereafter.
- Please talk to your doctor about your alcohol use.
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The most common side effects of LIVALO in clinical studies were:

- Back pain
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- Diarrhea
- Muscle pain
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This is not a complete list of side effects.

Other Important Information about LIVALO

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What else should I know about LIVALO?

- LIVALO can be taken with or without food. It's even okay to continue drinking grapefruit juice.
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- LIVALO is available by prescription only.

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PS72636 LIV-MT-0118

LIVALO® (pitavastatin) tablets (LIV-ah-lo) – Consumer Brief Summary Information.

Information for Patients about LIVALO® (pitavastatin) tablets:

Please read this information carefully before you, or your family member, start taking LIVALO and each time your prescription is refilled in case anything has changed or new information has become available. This information is not meant to take the place of discussions with your healthcare provider. Talk with your healthcare provider or pharmacist if there is something you do not understand or if you want to learn more about LIVALO. Always follow your healthcare provider's instructions for taking LIVALO.

What is LIVALO?

- LIVALO is a prescription medicine that belongs to a group of cholesterol-lowering medicines called “statins”.
- LIVALO, along with diet, lowers, total cholesterol, “bad” cholesterol (LDL-C) and triglycerides. It can also raise “good” cholesterol (HDL-C).

What is the most important information I should know about LIVALO?

- Muscle Problems called myopathy and rhabdomyolysis may occur at any time. Muscle problems may increase with higher doses, as you get older, with kidney or some thyroid problems, and when LIVALO is used with some other medications.
- Liver tests may become abnormal. Your doctor should do liver tests before you start and while you are taking LIVALO.

Who should NOT take LIVALO?

- Anyone known to be allergic or hypersensitive to LIVALO or any of its ingredients.
- Anyone who has liver problems, this may include some unexplained, abnormal liver test results.
- Patients with severe kidney disease not on hemodialysis.
- Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant, or are nursing mothers.
- Anyone who is taking cyclosporine.

What are the possible side effects of LIVALO?

Serious side effects may include:

- **Muscle problems** may be an early sign of a rare problem that could lead to serious kidney problems.
Call your doctor right away if you have any unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness, particularly if accompanied by fever or a general feeling of discomfort.
- **Liver problems** may occur. Your doctor should do liver tests before you start and while you are taking LIVALO.

Common side effects include:

- Back pain
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Muscle aches and pains
- Pain in the legs or arms

This is not a complete list of side effects of LIVALO. Talk to your healthcare professional for a complete list.

Can other medications affect your treatment with LIVALO? Yes, other medications may affect LIVALO, you should consult with your doctor if you take any of the following:

- Erythromycin
- Rifampin
- Other drugs for high cholesterol (i.e., fibrates, niacin)

What should I tell my doctor before taking LIVALO?

Tell your doctor if you:

- are allergic to LIVALO or any of its ingredients (You may get a full list of ingredients from your doctor or pharmacist.)
- are pregnant, think you are pregnant, are planning to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding.
- are having or have been told you have liver or severe kidney problems.
- are taking other medications. Discuss all medication, both prescription and over-the-counter, with your doctor.
- consume alcoholic beverages.

How should I store and take LIVALO?

- Store LIVALO at room temperature, in a dry place, protected from light, and keep out of the reach of children.
- LIVALO can be taken at any time of day, with or without food.
- Swallow the tablet whole. Do not split, crush, dissolve, or chew.
- If you take too much LIVALO or you or someone else takes an overdose, call your doctor and/or local Poison Control Center.

The information provided is not complete. Please see the Full Prescribing Information available at www.LIVALORX.com.

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Top Ten Things You Don't Know About Fang Wong

- 10.** He's got a quirky sense of humor. Asked where one can find a good meal in Chinatown, he quips, "Lots of places with spaghetti and pizza."
- 9.** He'll read anything by Tom Clancy and W.E.B. Griffin. "A couple of Clancy's books have predicted stuff that's happened in the past 10, 15 years. I mean, it's scary! How does he know?"
- 8.** When meeting him, some people have mistaken his name for Frank – including his wife, Barbara.
- 7.** He graduated from Hamburger University, the exclusive McDonald's leadership-training program. In fact, he'd probably own a store in Silver Spring, Md., today if his son, Eric, hadn't protested moving. "We held a family meeting in our Ford Windstar, right there in the parking lot, and I got outvoted 2 to 1. I always remind my son, 'Don't ever complain to me that I don't have any money. I don't want to hear it.'"
- 6.** He doesn't dance. Well, "one slow dance, that's it."
- 5.** He admits to nitpicking films. "Going to the movies with my dad is probably the worst time you'll ever have," Eric says, laughing. "We'll be watching 'Ocean's Eleven,' and he'll want to know how the guy can rappel down an elevator shaft. But Westerns don't bug him, even when someone fires multiple times without reloading."
- 4.** He met Barbara through a friend who was coaching a girls' basketball team. "She was one of the players," he says. "I was the captain!" she reminds him.
- 3.** He smoked for two months while serving in Vietnam. Tired of being asked for cigarettes, and worried that he'd be seen as antisocial, he got a pack so he'd have some to offer. One day, he caught himself reaching for his pocket to light up. "I threw them away, and the next time people asked me for a cigarette, I offered them a match," he says.
- 2.** His favorite music includes Cantonese opera.
- 1.** He's a Yankees fan.

A Good Investment. Wong retired from the Army in 1989 as a chief warrant officer. The next day, he took a job with a defense contractor that supports the Army's Software Engineering Center at Fort Monmouth. He also figured it was time to join the Legion, now that he was eligible.

To Wong's surprise, he'd been eligible for years. "Nobody bothered to explain, really, and I didn't ask," he says. "Sometimes the word 'veteran' is misleading. I think that a lot of times we fail to mention that you can be a member of the Legion while you're still on active duty."

Looking ahead, Wong knows some media will play up the fact that he's the organization's first minority commander, but he'd rather talk about the job itself. "It is special, don't get me wrong, but I want people to see me as just another commander, who happens to be Chinese-American," he says. "I'm a commander for everybody."

His focus is membership: not just signing up more veterans, but keeping them. Wong says people join the Legion because they agree with its central mission: "Strong defense, taking care of veterans – who would say no to those things?" Relevant programs also sell potential members on the benefits of belonging, he says.

"Once you sign up, you get handed off to a post, and if that post isn't doing the things you were told by the recruiter, we haven't lived up to your expectations. Especially in metropolitan areas, you have a lot of competition for a veteran's time and money. We need to make sure Legion posts are doing the right programs, doing the right things, to meet the expectation of the member" – in other words, satisfy the customer, and he'll tell his friends about your organization.

Wong believes the Legion has something for everyone, but he's a big fan of its youth programs.

"You plant the seed, and you'll get a harvest at a certain point. The young people who benefit from the Legion, they appreciate it. When they're ready, they'll come back and join."

Not everyone will be a national commander, but when Legionnaires reach out to children in their communities, they inspire another generation of leaders, Wong says.

"For the post's \$15, I gave them 40 years of service," he says. "That's a good investment." 🌿

Matt Grills is managing editor of The American Legion Magazine.

Follow National Commander Fang Wong online:
 www.legion.org/commander

Reversal of Fortune

*Afghanistan's seat on top of a bonanza of rare earths
might be just what is needed to rebuild the country.*

BY ALAN W. DOWD





China produces 97 percent of the world's rare-earth elements (REEs) – a family of metals and minerals critical to a range of technologies with commercial and military applications – and has begun to manipulate the global REE market by dramatically slowing, and in some cases even halting, export of these materials. In fact, after a maritime dispute with Japan last year, China stopped supplying REEs to Japanese customers and then reduced overall global exports by 72 percent in the second half of 2010, before cutting export quotas for the first half of 2011 by 35 percent. As a result, prices for some REEs jumped tenfold.

Although Beijing has resumed delivery of REEs and vowed that it will “not use rare earths as an instrument for bargaining,” China's actions have prompted the United States, Japan and Europe to explore alternative sources.

The good news is that market forces are already at work diversifying the supply chains of this strategic resource. The better news is that one of those alternative sources happens to be a country that desperately needs an economic lifeline: Afghanistan.

Wake-Up Call. Before getting into what Afghanistan can contribute to the rare-earth solution, it's important to understand what rare earths are, and what role they play in fueling the global economy and even in defending the United States.

First: technically, the term “rare-earth element” is a misnomer. “Rare they aren't,” says Ian London of Avalon Rare Metals. “If you took a shovel and dug a hole in your backyard, you'd probably find some rare earths. We have more than enough supply. What is rare is finding them in economic quantities.”

Moreover, processing and refining rare earths can be complicated and messy.

With otherworldly names like neodymium, lanthanum, europium and thulium, rare earths are essential to the manufacture of a range of modern technologies, including cell phones, flat-panel televisions, microwave ovens,

RESOLUTION URGES LONG-TERM PLAN

The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed a resolution in May that calls on DoD to “provide an assessment of the needs of the U.S. rare-earth supply chain for defense” and produce a long-term plan to address the production gap between the United States and China. Res. No. 25, submitted by the National Security Commission, acknowledges the importance of rare-earth elements in defense equipment and weapons, and a nearly 500-percent increase in the price of “select rare earths” over the past two years.

hybrid engines, computers, light bulbs, lasers, industrial magnets, batteries, X-ray and MRI equipment, fiber optics and superconductors.

Pending legislation in Congress calls rare earths “critical to national security,” and understandably so. Studies conducted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Congressional Research Service (CRS) indicate that rare earths are essential to the production of the navigation system of the M1A2 Abrams tank, missile-guidance systems, fighter-jet engines, missile defenses, satellites, night-vision equipment and military-grade communications gear.

The active sources of REE-bearing materials are in China, Mongolia, Malaysia, Russia and India. California, Brazil, Canada and Australia could start producing by 2015, and Idaho, Montana and Florida could come on line sometime after that. Fully exploiting Afghanistan's REE wealth will take more time, given the country's inadequate economic and industrial infrastructure.

Recognizing the importance of rare earths to its own economic growth and military capabilities, China declared most REEs “strategic commodities” in 2007. As a consequence, the Department of Energy (DoE) notes that China has restricted foreign investment in REE development, raised export taxes on them, reduced their export quotas, started stockpiling them, and given priority to its own domestic demand.

China “has predominant control” over the mining and supply of the 17 REEs, according to CRS. That became painfully evident in 2010. Not only did Beijing block shipment of all rare earths to Japan; it also restricted the export of rare-earth oxide and metal to the United States and Europe.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called China's suspension of REE shipments “a wake-up call.”

Not only is the REE supply chain dangerously undiversified, but global demand is far outpacing supply. CRS reports that the world consumes

134,000 tons of rare-earth minerals and metals annually, but produces only 124,000 tons.

After China's mini-embargo of REEs last year, Clinton called on the United States, Japan and their allies "to look for additional sources of supply ... to protect the important production needs that these materials serve. That is in our interests commercially and strategically."

Toward that end, Japan, which imports more REEs than any other country, is assisting Mongolia in developing its rare-earth mines. Thanks to its rare-earth deposits and openness to foreign investment – Mongolian president Elbegdorj Tsakhia recently reported that "Mongolia's GDP is set to triple over the next decade."

Indeed, rare earths are found in plenty of countries other than China – dependable, friendly countries. "At least 40 percent of the world's rare-earth reserves are located within the United States and its ally nations," according to congressional findings. The United States possesses 15 percent of the world's rare-earth reserves, and used to have a major presence in every segment of the REE supply chain. In fact, from 1965 to 1985, the United States performed all phases of REE processing, according to the GAO. A mine in California was one of the world's largest rare-earth producers before shutting down in 2002.

One of the main reasons the United States stopped producing rare earths was the environmental side effects of rare-earth mining, which can include toxic waste. This led to a host of regulations that had the effect of discouraging rare-earth production – and sending it to China.

Rare-Earth Rebirth. A recent DoE report concludes that rebuilding a diversified REE supply chain means "taking steps to facilitate extraction, processing and manufacturing here in the United States." U.S. firms are already taking those steps. One company plans to mine 20,000 tons of REEs from California annually.

In addition, new legislation would "re-establish a competitive domestic rare-earths minerals-production industry" by "reviewing laws and policies that discourage investment in, exploration for, and development of domestic rare earths."

Other proposals percolating in Congress would direct DoE to pave the way for exploration and recovery of rare-earth materials. Some would offer loan guarantees for research and exploration, others would carry out a "global rare-earth element-resource assessment," and still others would create a rare-earth stockpile.

FROM CORN TO NIOBIUM

The tiny town of Elk Creek, Neb., "may be sitting on the world's largest untapped deposit of rare-earth minerals," *The Washington Times* reports. After conducting test drills in and around the town, a company specializing in exploration and development of rare earths concludes that there are "significant" deposits of these precious elements in Elk Creek, which has a population of just 112. In addition, there are indications that the region may hold niobium, which can be used to strengthen the steel used in cars and aerospace technologies.

That last item is crucial, given that the United States does not currently maintain a strategic reserve of rare-earth compounds, metals or alloys. That needs to change. As one key piece of pending rare-earth legislation observes, "Self-sufficiency requires an uninterrupted supply of strategic materials critical to national security and innovative commercial-product development, including rare earths."

A 2010 DoE report argues that rare earths and other strategic resources should be featured pieces of a revived National Defense Stockpile, large parts of which were liquidated beginning in the 1990s.

The United States is not alone in the rare-earth rebirth. Canada and Australia are gearing up REE-production efforts. "Australia stands ready to be a long-term, secure, reliable supplier of rare earths," foreign minister Kevin Rudd said after China closed off the REE supply lines last year.

The U.S. government reports that fully rebuilding America's rare-earth supply chain "may take up to 15 years."

A Big "If." Afghanistan can be part of the long-term solution to this problem. Given the growing disparity between REE production and consumption, along with China's lack of dependability, Afghanistan's mineral wealth could become a win-win situation both for the people of Afghanistan, and for the global market of producers and consumers of high-tech equipment.

But a note of caution is in order. If rebuilding the rare-earth mining and manufacturing base in the United States – among the richest, most developed and most stable countries on earth – is going to take a decade or more, then building a rare-earth mining system from scratch in one of the most broken countries on the planet is not going to happen overnight. The conditions in Afghanistan are anything but ideal: corruption is high; stability exists only in pockets, speaking to the country's

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overall instability; and the ingredients that encourage foreign investment – rule of law, human capital, public infrastructure – are in short supply.

But what Afghanistan lacks in economic and public infrastructure, it makes up for in rare-earth riches. The U.S. Geological Survey and the Pentagon have found huge stores of natural-resource wealth in Afghanistan. In addition to niobium, aluminum, gold, phosphorus, zinc, magnesium cobalt and copper, Afghanistan's newfound riches include oil and an estimated \$420 billion in iron. A Pentagon memo calls Afghanistan the "Saudi Arabia of lithium," which is technically not a rare earth. However, as a key component in batteries used in computers, cell phones and electric cars, it serves some of the same purposes as rare earths.

Citing these discoveries, retired Gen. David Petraeus believes Afghanistan has a "stunning potential" for development, growth and perhaps the most dramatic reversal of fortune in history. "Afghanistan is blessed with the presence of ... trillions of dollars worth of minerals," he observes.

Estimates range from \$1 trillion to \$3 trillion in mineral wealth. To underscore the impact such development could have, Afghanistan's entire GDP is just \$27 billion. The Afghan government collects about \$1 billion in tax revenue annually, but could increase that figure by as much as \$3.5 billion with royalties, taxes and fees from the mining sector, according to Afghan officials. In short, after three decades of war, there may be a silver lining in this broken, battered land.

But those rare-earth resources that the world needs to fuel the 21st-century economy, those trillions in untapped wealth that could help turn Afghanistan around, can be accessed, as Petraeus cautions, "if, and only if, you can get the extractive technology, the human capital operated, the lines of communication to enable you to get it out of the country. A very big 'if.'"

China appears ready to take that chance, no matter the cost. There are reports that Beijing won the rights to develop a copper mine south of Kabul by bribing mining officials with \$30 million.

Given China's stranglehold on the rare-earth market – and America's commitment in blood and treasure to Afghanistan's future – allowing China to stroll in and harvest Afghanistan's rare-earth riches seems both unwise and unfair. The United States should use its considerable leverage with the Afghan government not to secure sweetheart deals for American investors and developers, but to ensure a level playing field for any firm willing to take a risk on Afghanistan's rare earths.



Rare-earth elements (REEs) are piled up for export along crane towers at the Port of Lianyungang in China's Jiangsu province. Imaginechina via AP Images

Some observers warn that if REE mining in Afghanistan really does take off, the country could succumb to the so-called resource curse – the notion that natural-resource wealth diverts investment away from other sectors and encourages high levels of government spending. Examples include Nigeria after oil discoveries, and the Netherlands after natural-gas discoveries.

But Stephen Haber and Victor Menaldo, political scientists specializing in the research of mineral booms, note that roughly twice as many countries have been blessed by resource booms as cursed by them. "Until its late-19th-century oil and mineral boom, Mexico was not a whole lot different from Afghanistan," they note, citing poor infrastructure, a largely illiterate population and a weak central government hampered by warlordism.

Oil and mineral discoveries did not cure all of Mexico's ills, of course, but they did help stabilize its political system and legitimize the state.

If something like that happens in Afghanistan – if its leaders can create a level playing field open and attractive to foreign investment, if its people can recognize that they have more to gain from compromise and cooperation than from cronyism and corruption, and if its disparate tribes can see themselves as part of one Afghan tribe – then the world can help solve Afghanistan's instability problem, and Afghanistan can help solve the world's rare-earth-supply problem.

But as Petraeus says, that's "a very big if." 🍀

Alan W. Dowd is a contributing editor for The American Legion Magazine. He writes the Landing Zone column at www.legion.org/landingzone.



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The American Legion has been helping veterans find answers for post-traumatic stress for over 90 years. As more soldiers come home from war with PTSD and traumatic brain injuries, the Legion continues to press for treatment programs that provide real relief. Hyperbaric oxygen, cognitive therapy and mixed martial arts are among the non-traditional options a growing number of sufferers are finding helpful, with or without definitive studies to prove their effect, or government sanction to cover their costs.

Tim Hecker was a career soldier, husband and father before he came home from war with PTSD and TBI. After limited success with traditional medicine, he found new hope in hyperbaric oxygen treatments.



THE WAR WITHIN

PART II: PATHS TO HEALING

Tim Hecker joined the Army at 18 and soon decided to make a career of it. He served 22 years in all, in and out of combat, rising to the rank of master sergeant. In the summer of 1990, he married his high-school sweetheart, Tina, and the couple had three children.

Then Tim couldn't remember having married Tina. He couldn't tell his sons apart. Their names escaped him.

STORY BY
STEVE B. BROOKS

PHOTOS BY
AMY C. ELLIOTT

Tina had to quit her part-time job when Tim came home. His doctor appointments put them on the road five days a week, sometimes two-and-a-half hours each way. "You can't leave him by himself because he gets lost," Tina says. "You never know what he is going to do."

Frustrated with her husband's descent and the lack of progress with traditional care, Tina went online and found information about Dr. Paul Harch, a New Orleans-based physician specializing in hyperbaric medicine. His facility, Harch Hyperbarics Family Physicians' Center, uses high-pressure oxygen to treat basic pathophysiologic conditions.

Following a phone call and an initial interview, Tim was selected to be part of Harch's pilot study on the use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) for TBI and PTS. He claims the treatments have given him back most of his pre-injury life.

"By the fourth treatment, I started feeling like a new person," he says at his home in West Edmeston, N.Y. "I was more aware. I could see things. The deeper I got into the treatments, my cognition started to come back – my motor skills and my balance. My vision started to improve. The biggest benefit was my emotional control."

Injuries suffered in two separate roadside-bomb explosions in a span of two months in Iraq in early 2008 left him with a traumatic brain injury and severe post-traumatic stress. He was no longer the man Tina had married.

"Didn't really remember us having kids," Tina explains. "Didn't remember us getting married. How do you explain to three teenage children that their father doesn't know anything about them anymore, doesn't know when they were born, doesn't know when their birthdays are, can't remember their names necessarily and can't remember any milestones from school? That's very difficult."

He forgot activities they used to share. "Simple little things, like going fishing with the kids. That just stopped. It's hard to explain to kids when you don't really have the answers yourself."

“We’re talking a 180-degree turnaround,” Tina says. “There are days when he’s almost back to normal with his personality.”

“I knew something was wrong, but I kept it hidden.”

Tim’s first encounter with an IED occurred while he was riding in a tractor-trailer in Iraq in January 2008. Two months later, he was riding in a convoy when the Humvee in front of his sustained a catastrophic hit. The blast was so severe that it impacted Tim’s vehicle. A field physician examined him after the explosion and determined that he could return to duty. “I was in a (quality-assurance and quality-control) role, so I was traveling from building site to building site, and detached from my unit,” Tim says. “So basically, as long as I was able to function, I stayed in the field.”

Because he worked away from his unit most of the time, no one noticed that Tim’s behavior had changed. “I was a miserable person,” he says. “I had migraines. I was very irritable. But everyone assumed, ‘He’s the ranking NCO. That’s just the way they are.’ But my communications and my writing and stuff were starting to show signs that something was wrong. I knew something was wrong, but I kept it hidden. In the military, any sign of weakness is not a good thing.”

Cognitive therapy: The process of relearning awaits government blessing

Dr. Wayne Gordon, a professor of rehabilitation medicine and associate professor of psychiatry at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, is an advocate of cognitive therapy for veterans, and has briefed the Legion’s PTS/TBI Ad Hoc Committee on its uses and benefits. He spoke with The American Legion Magazine about the treatment.

What does the cognitive-therapy process involve?

One way to look at it is there are basic skills that are designed to help people improve their attention, memory and processing speed. And then there are more complex skills that people learn to help them regulate their emotions, think through situations, respond more effectively and efficiently. The first set of skills are usually done on an individual basis, and require a lot of practice over time. The second set of skills are usually done on a root basis, and require a considerable amount of time. The amount of time it takes to treat somebody is really a function of a person beginning to learn a new set of habits.

How long has cognitive therapy been used to treat traumatic brain injuries?

The interventions really started to be developed in 1967, so this is not something that’s new. Over time, they’ve improved and gotten more sophisticated.

I think it’s always been around to treat veterans. I think because there are so many soldiers coming back from the war with traumatic brain injuries, there’s more and more pressure on delivering the service.

Is cognitive therapy really just a matter of relearning something that has been lost?

What is going on is a person begins to learn skills that they used to have, and relearn skills, and practice. And then you give the person a set of strategies that he can apply across situations.

What kind of results have you seen in clinical trials?

Consistently, we see that cognitive rehab is an effective intervention, and that comprehensive holistic programs are the most effective.

Why has the federal government been slow to sanction it?

I think the big fear is what it’s going to cost them. I haven’t seen cost estimates, but if you’re talking about soldiers getting several hours a day of treatment over multiple days a week for a period of at least three to six months, you’re talking about a huge amount of money.

What is the status of TRICARE coverage for cognitive therapy for TBI and PTS?

I think it’s gone through several phases.

TRICARE sent it out for its own systematic review about a year and a half ago, got the review back and sent it out for comment, and it was trashed. So they withdrew it. Since then, the Department of Defense has now contracted with the Institute of Medicine to do its own review and report to DoD. I hope the report will be issued by the end of the year. I testified before the committee. It was a very fair group. My feeling is that the committee has no choice but to endorse the intervention, because there’s nothing else out there. You can’t treat traumatic brain injury with a pill.



Dr. Wayne Gordon is hopeful that a new study will validate cognitive therapy.

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Tim couldn't hide it from his wife, though. "He became quiet," Tina says. "His phone calls, although daily, were very limited. He would talk about the weather, and that was about it. Never asked about kids, never asked about family, never asked about home, community, none of that. He started becoming very agitated, and the slightest little thing that most normal people might have some kind of reaction to, he would blow way out of proportion. It got to the point where I was hearing him threaten others working around them. He wouldn't threaten them directly; he would talk about it to me. That's when I got a hold of his (physician assistant) over there and said, 'Somebody needs to pay close attention. There's something going on.' His only suggestion was, 'We'll keep an eye on him, check him once a week. And when he gets home, maybe you should take him to the VA.'"



Tim Hecker, his wife, Tina, and their daughter, Brianne, have worked together to confront his PTS and TBI.

Tim redeployed stateside that June. A month later, he went to the VA medical center in Syracuse. "The initial diagnosis was severe PTSD and (mild) TBI," he says. "They started me on a bunch of antidepressants, and I forget what the other ones were. Basically, I was taking a bunch of pills."

"Things just got worse and worse. Finally, they gave me a diagnosis of post-concussive syndrome. They focused on the PTSD at first, figuring in time the brain-injury symptoms would wear off. That wasn't the case. They got progressively worse. I have prided myself in being a member of the military for over 20 years, and I felt my whole livelihood slipping away."

Tina became increasingly frustrated by the prescription-based treatment program. She says that in early 2009, "a pharmacist refused to fill his prescriptions because they were from different doctors, and he said that if he filled them, the combination would have killed Tim. Then he took all the pills he had and dumped them in the toilet. I didn't even have a say in that. At that point, we needed to do something with him. They really don't have any suggestions for TBI, other than pills and therapy. Some cognitive therapy. But it's kind of hard to give someone cognitive therapy when their brain's not able to process what you're trying to reteach them."

Tim stayed at an Army Reserve center three hours from home during that time, and Tina had to walk him through his daily routine by telephone. She had to remind him to eat breakfast, shower, get dressed and brush his teeth. When he came home, he spent days sitting in a chair and staring, unless instructed otherwise.

The Heckers' daughter, Brianne, was 16 when she became a caregiver for her dad. "I started trying to figure out how to help," says Brianne, now a freshman at the State University of New York. "We had to continuously ask how he was doing, what he was doing, what he was supposed to be doing, where he was going – sort of keeping him in check. We were always raised to help others and put others before ourselves. It was a change, yes, but I was glad I was able to help."

Still, Tim's condition worsened, and Tina sought help elsewhere. A frequent visitor to military websites, she came across a comment about a story on hyperbaric oxygen treatments that specifically referenced Harch's program. "I started looking up Dr. Harch myself, and that's when I realized he was running a pilot study. I called Tim and

Martial-arts workouts help PTS sufferers fight their way out of the abyss

BY KELLY CRIGGER

Marine Lt. Lee Stuckey hates medications, but without them he's robbed of sleep by the sweats and tremors of post-traumatic stress. He is one among every eight Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who faces combat PTS. After two tours and a close encounter with an IED, he feels fortunate to have all his limbs, his eyesight and no serious loss of motor skills. But going home posed a new set of challenges. He was placed in the medical platoon at Camp Lejeune, N.C., with a group of fellow Marines also struggling with PTS.

"Marines get frustrated with the traditional treatment of talking it out," Stuckey says. "Guys would just go back to their barracks rooms and drink away their pain all night. It just wasn't a good situation."

An avid martial artist, Stuckey took it upon himself to drag the others into Camp Lejeune's Semper Fit gym. There, he introduced them to Andrea Lucie and her regimen of yoga, meditation, and martial arts.

"A Muay Thai combination is hard for a patient suffering from traumatic brain injury," Lucie says. "But it helps them focus because there are repetitive movements they have to remember, and it's a disciplined act. Marines are disciplined people, so they relate."

By combining vigorous mixed martial arts (MMA) workouts with yoga and meditation for relaxation, Lucie and Stuckey soon found that the Marines were adjusting and sleeping better.

Quite simply, Marines are more interested in physical challenges like martial arts than sitting in group therapy talking about how they feel. They'd rather hit something. MMA provides that outlet so they don't take it out on themselves or others.

"MMA humbles Marines," Stuckey says. "It shows them they don't have to be aggressive – that it's OK to admit when you're suffering."

In San Diego, former Army Sgt. Todd Vance, a veteran of more than 200 combat missions, was going through the same hell as Stuckey, but without a list of medications or a barracks full of comrades to help him.

"I was bad," Vance says. "I was rated an 8 out of 10 on the PTSD scale. I drank until I blacked out, just to sleep. I got into fights all the time, and took a job working construction so I didn't have to

talk to anyone. MMA played a huge role in my recovery. If I had a rough day, I could go to the gym and get on the bags until my knuckles were raw."

Vance also sought support at the Mission Valley VA Hospital in San Diego, where many of his fellow veterans had slid into deep depressions, and where he eventually found a meaningful job. That's also where he got an idea. An avid Muay Thai fighter, he worked out a deal with his gym to conduct free MMA classes for veterans. "For about three months, it was the same five guys every week. Now we have about 15 or 20 regulars, and the guys essentially have free memberships to train every day."

Vance's veterans had a different degree of PTS than Stuckey. At Camp Lejeune, Stuckey's Marines had the safety of their barracks. The same wasn't true on the West Coast, where homelessness and drug addiction were prevalent among Vance's students. That presented an obstacle greater than the baseline PTS itself.

At the heart of the problem is the elevated state of mind soldiers have when in combat, resembling a chemically induced high, which they come to feel is normal. When

they search for that same feeling when they return – through reckless driving, fighting, and in some cases extreme sports – MMA provides a self-contained outlet. It also provides camaraderie and brotherhood among participants, not entirely unlike a military unit.

In both cases, the results are positive. Vance's formerly strung-out students are now outgoing and upbeat. Former addicts are now clean, getting strong, and focused on grappling and kickboxing competitions. At Camp Lejeune, the Marines at Semper Fit are coping better than ever, and Lucie is pushing for an in-depth study on the effects of MMA as a treatment for PTS.

Kelly Crigger is a former Army lieutenant colonel. He is the author of three books on mixed martial arts, and his articles have appeared at MMAJunkie.com and in Military Times and FIGHT! magazine.



Army veteran Todd Vance has shown fellow veterans how MMA can help kick PTS.

asked him, ‘What do you think?’ He was at zero. I got nothing out of him. He didn’t really want to do it. He was sluggish. I told him, ‘I’m going to go ahead and do it, and let’s see what happens.’”

Tim did a phone interview with Harch and met the study’s criteria. In April 2009, he traveled to New Orleans to receive HBOT.

“He went in with a migraine, came out, and it was gone,” she says. “He starting picking up in his attitude, and the brightness in his eyes was coming back. He started to remember how to get back to the facility we were staying at. (Before the treatments) he couldn’t get from home to a gas station without a GPS. Now he was remembering a place we’d only been in four days.”

After the first round of treatments, the Heckers returned to West Edmeston. Brianne quickly sensed a difference in both of her parents. “When they came back, it was like getting new parents back,” she says. “It’s a big relief to know we won’t hit rock bottom again with him.”


Tim goes to New Orleans for treatments twice a year; the number of oxygen-chamber “dives,” as they are called, is now down to seven per trip. He can always tell when it’s time for another round. “It’s like you take a flashlight that’s got a dim bulb, and you put fresh batteries in it and get this bright light,” he says. “That’s how I feel emotionally, mentally and physically. As the treatments wear off, I start to get tired. I forget things. My balance gets off. It’s just a huge difference.”

As a result, Tina is an enthusiastic promoter of Harch and HBOT. “I carry his information with me,” she says. “I’ve brought it to families who’ve had people who’ve had injuries. I tell them, ‘Give it a chance.’”

Alternative roads to recovery

National Intrepid Center of Excellence

 www.dcoe.health.mil/componentcenters/nicoe.aspx


 (866) 966-1020

 resources@dcoeoutreach.org

NICoE is a treatment center in Bethesda, Md., that blends cognitive and holistic therapies in a plan that also includes family education and reintegration support. Family members stay at a Fisher House during treatment.

The Pathway Home

 thepathwayhome.org

 (707) 948-3031


A California residential recovery program created for OIF/OEF veterans, as well as veterans of the global war on terror who served in other locations. Treatment includes relaxation to help reduce physical responses to tension and stress, and practical instruction in skills for coping with anger, stress and other problems.


Healers and Heroes


 njhealersandheroes.com

Created by the Medical Society of New Jersey and the state’s Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the program gives returning servicemembers opportunities to meet with doctors who have military experience, for informal consultations and referrals.

P2V

 p2v.org

 info@pets2vets.org

 (877) 311-4P2V (4728)

Founded by Air Force veteran and PTS sufferer David Sharpe, P2V pairs up specially trained dogs with active-duty military personnel, veterans and emergency first responders, as well as spouses and survivors. Other organizations, such as Patriot PAWS and Hounds4Heroes, offer similar services. DoD and VA are studying the effects of such programs.

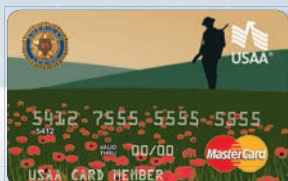
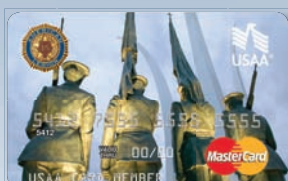
DoD’s T2 Virtual PTSD Experience

 t2health.org/vwproj

Accessed through the Second Life virtual-reality program, T2 allows servicemembers to anonymously learn about symptoms of PTS, and where to get help. A servicemember can create an avatar to navigate through realistic scenarios in Second Life. These include a simulation demonstrating how PTS may be acquired during a combat-related traumatic event, an explanation of the connections between danger cues and triggers, the role of avoidance in the development of PTS, and how PTS is a normal human response to traumatic events.



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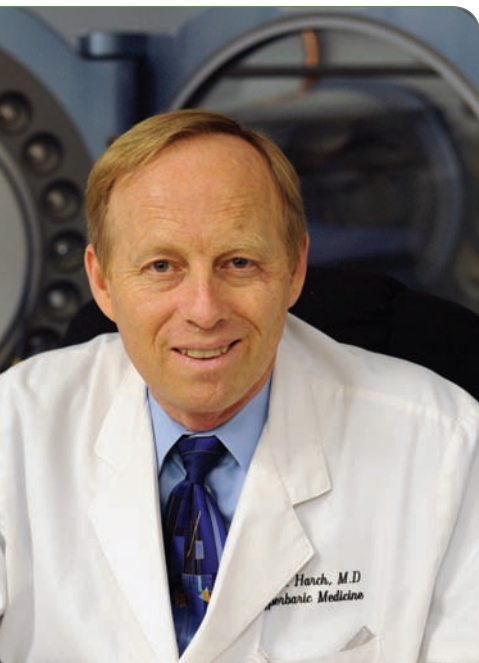
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"The purpose of this is to give them their lives back, give them back their families."



Dr. Paul Harch of New Orleans says cost is the main reason more veterans suffering with TBI and PTS don't pursue hyperbaric oxygen treatment.

In recent years, Harch has treated dozens of veterans using hyperbaric oxygen. He conducted a study of 15 PTS/TBI patients by administering a battery of tests before and after the treatments. They showed an average IQ improvement of nearly 15 points. Thirteen out of those 15 reported fewer headaches. Nine of the 12 who had insomnia before the treatments cited improved sleep. Seven of the 11 subjects on prescription medication for their conditions cut back on or quit the medications.

Harch also used the military's PTS checklist to score subjects before and after treatments. They showed 30-percent reductions in their PTS scores after hyperbaric oxygen treatments.

"The purpose of this is to give them their lives back, give them back their families," Harch says. "We sent them off to war, and they allow me to sit here in my comfort and do what I'm doing and not worry about being blown up or worry about the security of my family. They put it all on the line, and they need to be rewarded for that. They deserve, at least, an attempt to get back some of that lost function. And that's what this can do."

Harch says the federal government's reluctance to accept HBOT as a legitimate treatment form for PTS and TBI comes down to money. "I firmly believe that's No. 1," he says. "We charge \$200 an hour at our clinic. The Medicare rate is about \$275 an hour. This is billed in hospitals at \$2,000 an hour. DoD has thrown out a figure that you need \$500,000 lifetime to treat a brain-injured veteran for these symptoms and problems. First of all, there's no evidence for that. Secondly, if you even took the 80-treatment protocol that I developed, that's \$160,000 at the billed hospital rate ... The reality is that treatment with drugs and all these other therapies is doubly expensive."

Also, there's an outdated perception about the procedure, Harch says. "This is my generation of doctors. We were taught that (HBOT) is a fraud. Nobody understood how it worked. It got a bad name when it was applied to multiple sclerosis. People stood up and claimed it affected impotence, balding and cancer. There is so much misinformation. We're working against this past body of misperceptions."

"The world became kind of frightening. You know you're not doing what you used to be able to do."

During a lunch break in his office in Shalimar, Fla., Okaloosa County Court Judge Patt Maney makes short work of a sandwich before speaking easily about how hyperbaric oxygen treatment has benefited him. Four years ago, like Tim Hecker, Maney was in what seemed a permanent daze caused by combat brain injury.

In 2005, Maney – a brigadier general in the Army Reserve – was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. As part of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Group, his job was to lend civilian expertise to military efforts in the wartorn nation. One day, while searching for a potable water source in the mountains above Kabul, Maney's convoy came under attack. An IED exploded, blowing his vehicle into the air and flipping it upside down.

Maney and two other passengers walked away from the blast. He went to the embassy, and then to a German army field hospital for evaluation. After several days of treatment, he was assigned back to the embassy, and 10 days later he went to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. "(Our) injuries at that point were probably underdiagnosed," Maney says.

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"I don't remember what the initial diagnosis was. Ultimately I ended up at Walter Reed with a traumatic brain injury diagnosis. At different times it was called other things: post-concussion syndrome, closed cranial injury, consciousness unknown, cognitive difficulties not otherwise specified."

He spent nearly 20 months there. "A lot of rehab, several surgeries," he says. "The problem with many of the ... blast-type injuries is that

there isn't an outward physical manifestation of the injury. I wouldn't remember conversation. I couldn't follow directions, couldn't comprehend. Couldn't balance a checkbook. Couldn't drive.

"At one point, I went over to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, which is about eight miles from Walter Reed," he adds. "I was in uniform. I stopped at a little PX gas station, and I couldn't figure out how to operate a self-service pump. I ended up asking the lady at the other side how to work it. You can imagine her surprise – somebody standing there in a general's uniform asking how to turn on a gas pump."

Maney couldn't concentrate. He had trouble sleeping. Treatment included several different medications that had little effect. "The world became kind of frightening," he says. "You couldn't do what you used to be able to do. I was

faced with the realization I was not only going to lose my military position, but I would also lose my civilian occupation and go from being a rather successful independent person to being really dependent on my wife for just about everything."

About that time, Maney called a doctor friend in Fort Walton Beach "just to say hi," he says. His friend suggested HBOT. Maney contacted his doctor at Walter Reed and asked about it, and the doctor said that while he didn't know much about the treatment, he was willing to try it. In October 2007, Maney began the treatments at George Washington University Hospital.

"The protocol runs for 40 one-hour dives," Maney says. "After about 10 or so dives, my wife thought she saw improvement, but she didn't say anything – not even to me – because she was afraid it was a false hope. After about 12 or 14, I started thinking I was getting better, but I didn't want to say anything. After about 20 dives, people who had seen me both before and after the injury started commenting to my wife and me: 'You're doing better. You look like you're doing better. You seem to be more engaged. You don't have the long pauses in your conversations. Your sentences tie together. You're talking in paragraphs.'"

After 40 dives, Maney showed substantial improvement. After a 30-day break, he did an additional 40. "By that time, I was able to start reading again," he says. "It had been very frustrating for me to not be able to read. I could pick up a page and read the first sentence. I could pronounce the words and understand the words. But by the time I read the second sentence, I'd forgotten what the first sentence said. As I



Judge Patt Maney of Florida struggled with driving, directions and other everyday tasks before hyperbaric oxygen treatments turned his life around.

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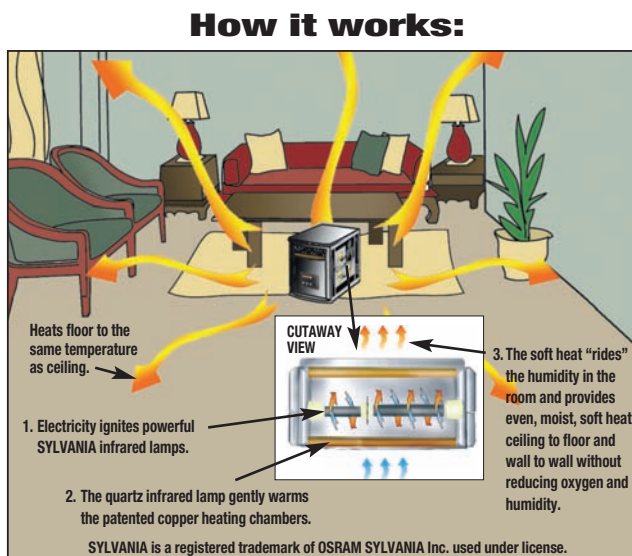
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started getting better and started reading, I did the other 40 dives, and I was able to come back and work full time as a judge.”

When Maney meets current and former servicemembers in his community who he suspects are suffering from PTS or TBI but haven’t been screened or diagnosed, he recommends HBOT. “I became much more sensitive to the plight of these soldiers and what they go through as they try to navigate what is a very complicated system that is not set up – was not and is not well set up – to deal with traumatic brain injuries or PTSD,” he says.

“I ran into a young man who lost both legs in Iraq. His hand was also mangled in an IED blast. He had never been treated, never been evaluated for PTSD or traumatic brain injury. As I’ve gotten active trying to help these young troops, I’ve been contacted by people – one Marine, several Air Force, several Army. I’ve been able to direct them into hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Every single one has shown improvement. Not all of them have gotten back to 100 percent, but if you’re functioning at 40 or 50 percent and you get back up to 75 or 80 percent, that’s a major quality-of-life improvement.”

“Everybody who has argued against hyperbarics, they don’t know what they’re talking about.”

When The American Legion’s PTS-TBI Ad Hoc Committee met in early August, VA’s Alison Cernich said that as a TBI treatment, hyperbaric oxygen is unproven and requires more research.

“Hyperbaric oxygen really has limited data right now,” says Cernich, acting senior liaison for TBI in VA’s Office of Rehabilitation Services. “I wouldn’t say I recommend or don’t recommend hyperbaric oxygen. I would say that in terms of its application, I think some of the claims that are being made are relatively wide, with the evidence relatively sparse.”

She adds that VA and DoD are co-funding a clinical trial on HBOT, and a report is expected within a year. She also referenced six severe TBI patients who were treated with hyperbaric oxygen at the University of Pittsburgh but experienced no improvement. “They’re not showing any improvements, say, on a functional-independence measure. That rates how well the person can do things independently: stand, sit, walk.”

Cernich warns against veterans and families setting expectations too high for an alternative treatment like HBOT.

Even so, Patt Maney and Tim Hecker see themselves as successful case studies for treating the signature wound of the war on terror with hyperbaric-oxygen dives.

“Everybody who has argued against hyperbarics, they don’t know what they’re talking about,” Hecker says. “Until you have suffered from a traumatic brain injury and felt that frustration and anger at not being yourself, and then get it back ... it’s amazing.

“If it hadn’t been for Dr. Harch, I’d have been labeled with conversion disorder and medically discharged. I understand that with the extent of my injuries and the disabilities I have, cognitively, I can function in society, but I can’t function at the level I need to as a master sergeant in the Army. That I can accept. I am going through the process of being retired out of the Army. I can accept it now. I’m going out on my terms. It’s not that I’m being pushed to the side. This is what needs to happen.” 🍷

Steve B. Brooks is multimedia editor for The American Legion.

More on PTS

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Next month

A Korean War veteran and former intelligence expert shares what he has learned from decades of studying the psychological effects of combat experience.

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*Thank-you.
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Got It Covered

Or do you? Take the time to understand your insurance policies.

BY JUNE LANTZ WALBERT

There are a host of routine tasks that protect you every day that may be well-suited for autopilot: brushing your teeth, taking your vitamins, buckling up for safety. However, having the right property and casualty insurance coverages is anything but automatic. Rather, these should be carefully considered and an evolving component of every Legionnaire's financial plan, because they, too, protect you every day.

Understanding insurance can be a challenge, but the effort required to master this seemingly complex topic can pay big dividends in a world filled with uncertainty.

Personal property and casualty insurance includes package policies that cover your personal liability, your major assets (such as your home or car), and all your miscellaneous personal belongings. Here's some of what you need to know.

Protect What You've Earned. Liability coverage is, in effect, a wall between your personal finances and unintentional injury or damage for which you may be responsible. Given the old saying "I'll sue you for what you're worth," this wall should be tall enough to shield your financial well-being from the results of an auto accident or other loss. Adequate liability coverage can help protect current assets and future income alike. The liability limit you choose on your auto and property insurance should match.

Liability insurance on your auto policy is required by state law and protects you if you cause an accident. It comes in two flavors: bodily injury and property damage. Bodily injury provides liability coverage for claims against you for the medical bills and loss of income of other people injured in the accident, and other personal damages. Property damage provides liability coverage for claims against you for inanimate objects damaged in an accident: other vehicles, fences, mailboxes, etc. Coverage minimums for both bodily injury and property damage vary by state, but they are typically very low and may not be adequate.

Homeowners and renters policies include personal liability coverage. They protect you when someone is injured at your home, or when you accidentally cause an injury or property damage anywhere in the world. An umbrella policy provides additional liability protection to ensure sufficient protection for large losses. Issued in \$1 million increments, this is coverage beyond the limits on your other personal policies and is generally inexpensive.

There are many factors you should consider when deciding how much liability protection you should carry. Depending on the severity of injuries and number of people affected, medical expenses and lost wages add up quickly, because a bodily injury claim can be severe. Next, consider your personal risk tolerance. You may prefer a high level of liability protection to have peace of mind, or you may be comfortable with lower limits. Then, consider how much you have to lose in the event of a loss. Generally, the higher your assets, the higher the protection level you should carry.

It's Not "Auto"matic. Automobile policies have physical damage and liability components. Collision coverage is aptly named: wreck the car, that's a collision, and this part of your policy covers damage to your vehicle. Comprehensive covers incidents such as a rock breaking your windshield, vandalism or hail damage. Since physical damage coverage is based on the current value of the vehicle, you may decide it doesn't make sense to continue collision and comprehensive coverage on an older vehicle.

That decision revolves around how much risk you're willing to take. Are you willing and able to shell out 100 percent of the funds needed to replace or fix your car?



**For more financial advice,
visit Ask the Financial Expert:**

www.legion.org/usaa/questions_answers

The primary way to save money on an auto policy is to be a safe driver with no tickets or accidents. Also, if you have an ample emergency fund, consider bumping your comprehensive deductibles (your out-of-pocket cost) up to \$1,000.

Shelter From the Storm. Bob Hartwig, head of the Insurance Information Institute, says we had a momentous first half of 2011 – “one for the record books.” There were 20,044 severe-weather reports through June 30, including 1,585 tornadoes, 7,176 “large hail” reports and 11,283 high-wind events.

With money tight, many folks try to save by skimping on homeowners insurance. But bear in mind that it doesn’t have to make the national news to be a personal disaster. Even if you don’t live in Tornado Alley or a hurricane or flood zone, your dwelling coverage should be sufficient to rebuild your home in the event of a complete loss.

Although the nation’s real-estate values have plummeted in recent years, reconstruction costs have done just the opposite. Since dwelling coverage is directly related to what it would cost to rebuild the home, a decrease in market value does not necessarily mean a reduction in the required dwelling coverage.

Another mistake is failing to update your coverage following extensive renovations. “A kitchen remodel with new custom cabinets and granite countertops is a beautiful upgrade, and in many instances adjusting your insurance coverage to protect that investment only costs a few dollars per month,” says Manny Rios, senior vice president, USAA Property & Casualty Underwriting. “You’re only fully protected if your homeowners insurance directly reflects how much it would cost to rebuild your home.”

In a recent example, fire damaged an Arkansas home beyond repair after the owner made a

significant investment to double its size. Fortunately, the owner had contacted his insurer 11 months prior to the loss to recalculate the estimated replacement cost, including the updates. Were it not for that call, the owner’s claims settlement would have been \$150,000 short of the \$340,000 it cost to rebuild the home. You can save on your premium by raising your deductible. If your home and car are covered by the same company, the cost of insurance typically declines.

Personal-property coverage is for furniture, clothing and other items in the home. If this stuff is destroyed – in a fire, for example – you’d receive a check to cover your losses in excess of the deductible. This coverage is often calculated as a percentage of your dwelling coverage.

CYA (Cover Your Assets). Renters insurance is a must-have for those renting a home or condo, college students, and military personnel living on or off post. But a recent statistic shows that less than half of renters have renters policies. If a burglar, vandal or Mother Nature strikes, your personal belongings would be covered with a renters policy in place. It’s inexpensive and also usually includes a liability component.

Make sure your policy provides for replacement value of your things. That way, you’ll be able to replace those items at today’s cost, not their depreciated value. The policy premiums typically range between \$15 and \$35 per month and are based on the amount of personal belongings and liability coverage selected.

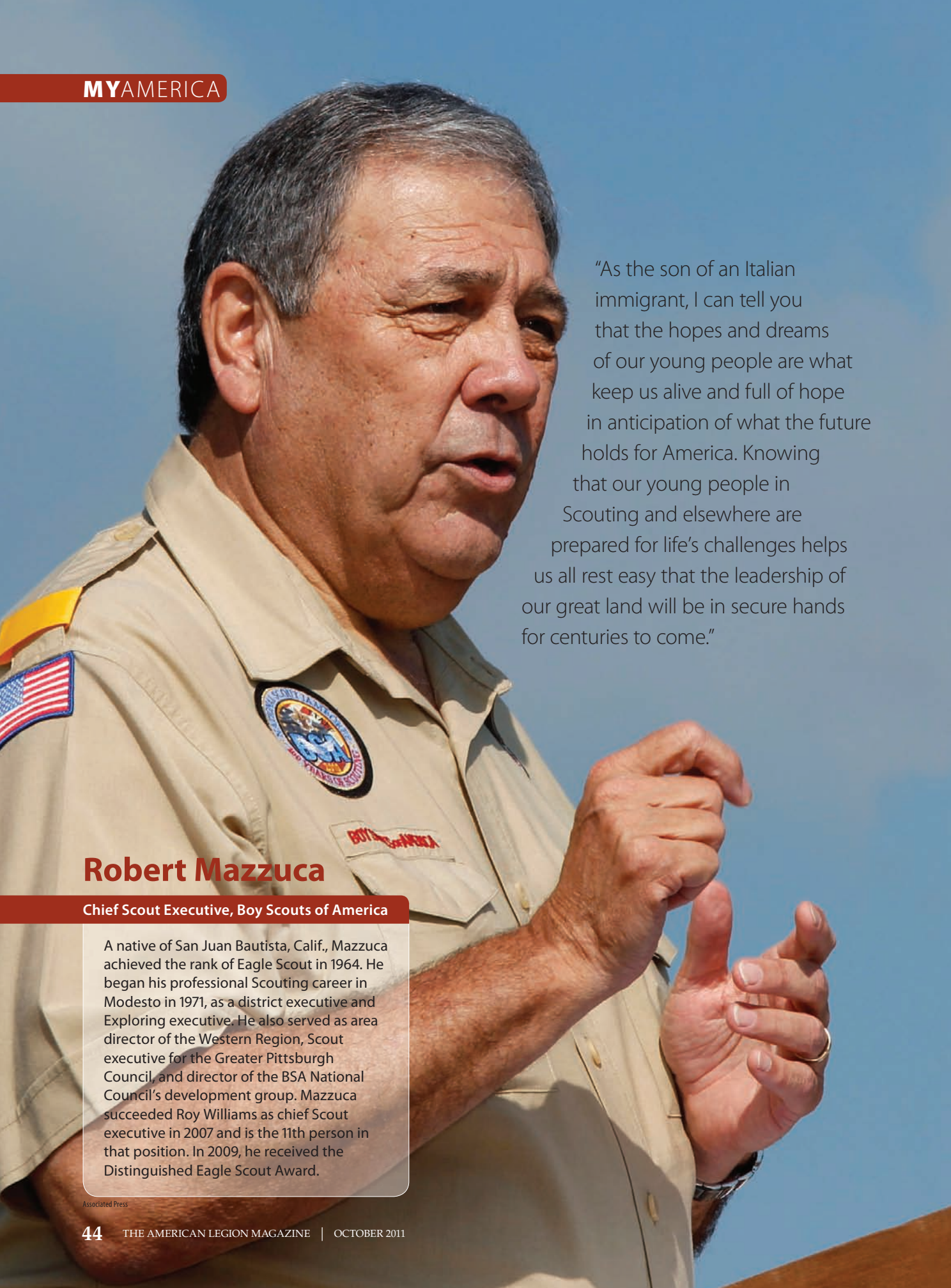
Most homeowners and renters policies limit coverage for the theft of things like jewelry, silverware and guns, and limit the types of losses that are covered. Additional coverage is often available to insure expensive items for their full value and provide coverage for things like loss or accidental damage.

There are many parts and pieces to various insurance policies. It’s important to read your policy and ask questions until you’re sure you understand that you have the right protection.

One last tip: don’t look for the cheapest coverage. Rather, shop for competitively priced policies offering protection you need from a highly rated company. Don’t let an accident wreak havoc on your financial dreams. 🌿

June Lantz Walbert is a certified financial planner with USAA Financial Planning Services, one of the USAA family of companies. USAA is The American Legion’s preferred provider for financial services.





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Robert Mazzuca

Chief Scout Executive, Boy Scouts of America

A native of San Juan Bautista, Calif., Mazzuca achieved the rank of Eagle Scout in 1964. He began his professional Scouting career in Modesto in 1971, as a district executive and Exploring executive. He also served as area director of the Western Region, Scout executive for the Greater Pittsburgh Council, and director of the BSA National Council's development group. Mazzuca succeeded Roy Williams as chief Scout executive in 2007 and is the 11th person in that position. In 2009, he received the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award.

Associated Press

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[MEMORIALS]

'MAN IN SEA' MONUMENT HONORS DIVERS

After years of dreaming, surveying, working with the Navy and securing support from businesses and other organizations, a group that wants to build a monument to U.S. military divers has a green light to move forward.

The Man in the Sea Memorial Monument is planned for the grounds of the Washington Navy Yard, the former site of the Navy Diving Training School. The idea's been talked about since the 1970s, but when the Homeland Security Policy Institute Group (HSPIG) set up an online forum for military divers in 2003, the concept of a diving memorial finally began to take shape.

Ex-Army diver and Sons of The American Legion member Jeff West joined the HSPIG project a few months later, and volunteered to solicit support and future donations from organizations, corporations and individuals – including actor Tom Hanks, who generously covered some of the cost of surveying the monument site. Meanwhile, former Navy submariner and bronze artist Jim Harrison Smith donated thousands of hours to create a small-scale representation of what the monument will look like.

In June, the Navy granted HSPIG permission to begin fundraising. A memorial committee has settled on a design for the monument: a 10- to 11-foot standing bronze sculpture of a figure in an MKV diving helmet and suit – aka JAKE, the rig used by hard-hat divers – near the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail and other Navy historical sites. Plans also call for a movable bridge, water wall, stairs and benches. Sustainable design strategies include the use of recycled aluminum for canopy structures, and the planting of native grasses and perennials. The cost is estimated at approximately \$10 million.

Thomas Barnes, co-founder of HSPIG, is a life member of the Legion. Other Legionnaires serve on the organization's advisory board. Explorer and environmentalist Jean-Michel Cousteau, and former VA Secretary Anthony Principi and his wife, Elizabeth – herself a Vietnam War veteran who served in the Judge Advocate General Corps – are among those lending their support to the Man in the Sea monument. A date for groundbreaking has not been set.

– Laura Edwards

Learn more about the project:

 www.hspig.org

Artist Jim Harrison Smith sculpted a monument prototype. Photo courtesy Jeff West



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[VERBATIM]

“They are living like parasites off the global economy and their monopoly of the dollar.”

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, accusing the United States of living beyond its means

“A sugar-coated Satan sandwich.”

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Mo., chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, on the deal to raise the debt ceiling and cut spending over the next decade

“That’s just unreal. That’s six mothers that six guys are going home to.”

Kevin Guy, owner of the Everything Hobby shop in Rochester, Minn., who helped software engineer Ernie Fessenden rig a radio-controlled model truck with a wireless video camera for his brother, Staff Sgt. Chris Fessenden, who is serving in Afghanistan. A group of soldiers borrowed the truck to check the road ahead of them while on patrol, and it got tangled in a trip wire. They were unharmed by the resulting explosion.

“Cold War, global war on terrorism, and now you have the code war, which is your war.”

Cofer Black, former director of the CIA’s Counterterrorism Center, warning that computer hackers will tamper not just with the Internet, but with real-world infrastructure

“The physics is really surprisingly similar to a pie in the face.”

Erik Asphaug, a planetary scientist at the University of California-Santa Cruz and co-author of a study theorizing that Earth once had two moons. Astronomers say the smaller moon hit the other in a low-velocity collision billions of years ago, explaining why the moon’s far side is hillier than the one facing Earth.

Sources: *Roll Call*, Reuters, ABC News, CNN, AP

[FOREIGN AFFAIRS]

Normandy windmills irk vets

Veterans groups on both sides of the Atlantic are voicing opposition to French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s plan to allow energy firms to build 100 wind turbines off the Normandy coast. If the plan goes forward, massive wind turbines – up to 525 feet high – will be planted seven miles off D-Day’s Juno Beach.

“They will be visible from all the Normandy landing beaches: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword,” Gérard Lecornu, president of the Port Winston Churchill Association of Arromanches, told Britain’s *Telegraph* newspaper. “D-Day is in our collective memory. To touch this is a very grave attack on that memory.”

Given that Juno was Canada’s beachhead, Sarkozy’s plans are especially unsettling to Canadian veterans. Calling the Normandy beaches “hallowed grounds,” D-Day veteran Jack Martin described the plans as “a disgusting affair” in an interview with Canada’s CTV.

In an interview with the web publication *The Daily Caller*, military historian Paul Stillwell recalled a similar controversy at Gettysburg, when an entrepreneur put up a large observation tower. It was considered a desecration, “and public opinion was such that it was finally demolished.”

Sarkozy opened bidding in August. France plans 1,200 wind turbines along its coast, the *Telegraph* reports. The EU currently has 1,132 offshore wind turbines and 70,488 on land, according to the *Financial Times*.

[WAR ON TERROR]

Iran takes aim

One of the unintended and unwelcome side effects of the post-9/11 wars on Iran’s borders is that they have provided Iran with thousands of U.S. targets. U.S. officials blame Iranian-built weapons, Iranian-trained terrorists and Iranian-backed fighters for the deaths of many Americans killed in Afghanistan and Iraq. Noting that the Iranians “have really hurt us,” Defense Secretary Leon Panetta wants to give U.S. commanders authority to do “whatever is necessary” to protect American forces. In Iraq, Tehran is supporting three different Shiite militias, ranging in size from a few hundred fighters to 5,000. Iran pays monthly stipends to the insurgent fighters and shovels hundreds of millions annually to their parent organizations, *Military Times* reports.

In Afghanistan, Iran is providing training and weapons to fighters in the south. The training includes mine-laying and small-unit tactics, and weapons shipments include long-range artillery, rockets and armor-piercing bombs, *The New York Times* reports. British troops in Afghanistan have intercepted rocket shipments, and NATO forces recently encountered Iranian snipers.



AP/Guillermo Arias

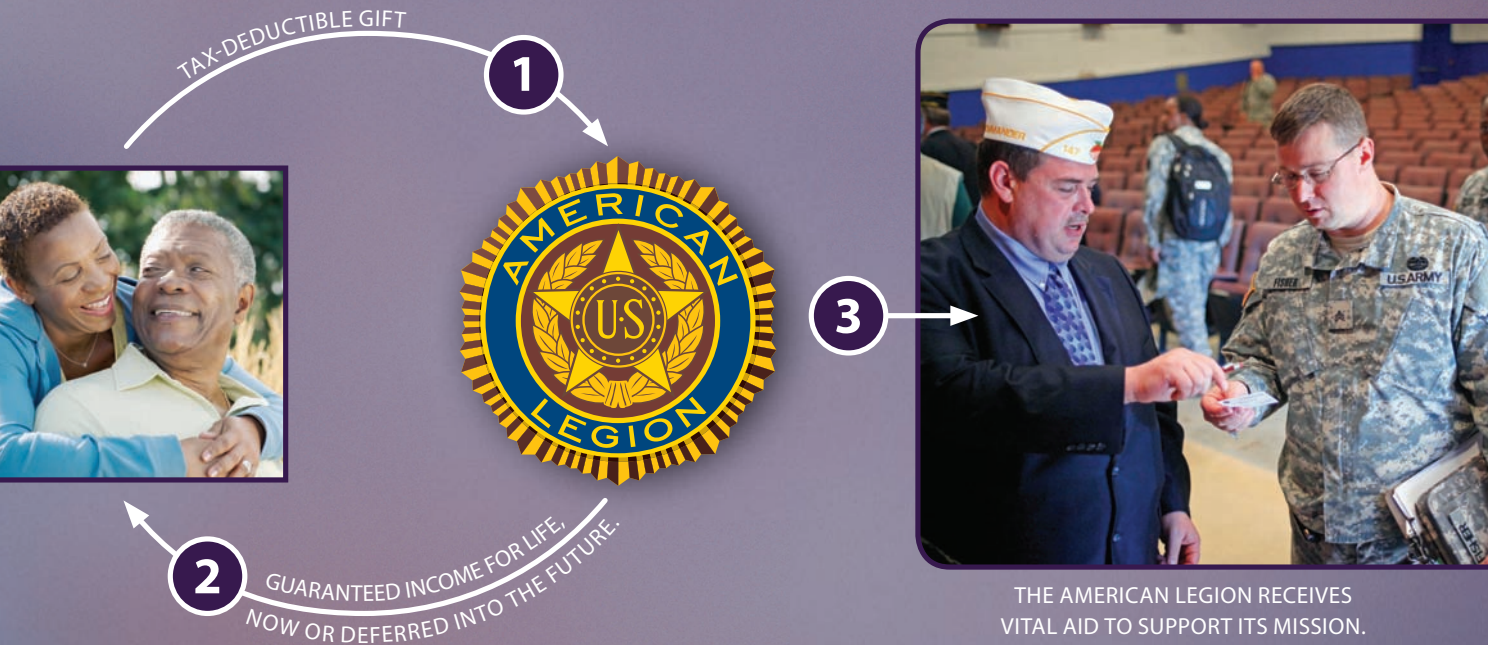
[HOMELAND SECURITY]

Tunnels and terror

A Senate committee reports that authorities discovered 11 new underground tunnels along the U.S.-Mexico border this year. The total number of cross-border tunnels discovered since 2001 is 125. To put that in perspective, only 12 tunnels were uncovered between 1990 and 2001, *The Hill* reports.

The tunnels carry everything from drugs and weapons to people and money. “They can be used to smuggle a terrorist or terrorists into the United States,” Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., warned during a hearing on the issue, adding that the Pentagon is concerned about the national-security implications of the tunnels.

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Daniel Lowe, left, and Mitchell Van Patten sean Crosier

[SHOOTING SPORTS]

Legion crowns air rifle champions

Mitchell Van Patten of Meridian, Idaho, captured the Sporter championship title at the 21st American Legion Junior Air Rifle National Championship in Colorado Springs, Colo., on Aug. 6. Shooting for the Meridian Optimist Junior Rifle Club and sponsored by Lloyd Hutcheson Post 113, Van Patten scored 2,295.9 out of 2,509 – just two points ahead of the runner-up.

The Precision competition began with a shootoff between two competitors for a place in the finals – the first in the event's 21 years. In the end, Daniel Lowe of Olympia, Wash., claimed the Precision championship title. Shooting for Capitol City Rifle & Pistol Club and sponsored by Edward B. Rhoades Post 2, Lowe scored 2,454.7 out of a possible 2,509.

Top five finishers, Precision

1. **Daniel Lowe, 2,454.7**
Olympia, Wash., sponsored by Edward B. Rhoades Post 2
2. **Caleb Nelsen, 2,449.5**
Ashland, Ohio, sponsored by Frank A. Bender Post 473
3. **Kirsten Moyer, 2,447.4**
Albuquerque, N.M., sponsored by Post 49
4. **Kelsey Moral, 2,441.9**
Sharpsburg, Ga., sponsored by Post 57
5. **Rachel Martin, 2,436.5**
Peralta, N.M., sponsored by Post 85

Top five finishers, Sporter

1. **Mitchell Van Patten, 2,295.9**
Meridian, Idaho, sponsored by Lloyd Hutcheson Post 113
2. **Renz Ibarra, 2,293.9**
Zion, Ill., sponsored by Post 865
3. **Maneva Gill, 2,281.2**
Pacifica, Calif., sponsored by Post 238
4. **Alexandrea Provine, 2,272.0**
Tucson, Ariz., sponsored by Morgan McDermott Post 7
5. **Michael Stroud, 2,269.7**
Des Moines, Iowa, sponsored by Post 42



[CHILDREN & YOUTH]

Share your story

American Legion youth programs have been changing lives for more than 90 years. The newly formed American Legion Youth Program Alumni Association offers former participants a place to share their success stories, network with one another, discover volunteer opportunities or donate to a Legion program of their choice.

Boys State and Boys Nation have helped launch hundreds of careers in government and public service. Olympians have been sculpted in Junior Shooting Sports clubs. Children of communities across the nation learn good citizenship and service through Legion-sponsored Scout programs. Through the years, thousands of young people have received scholarships, educations, opportunities and support through Legion youth programs. Membership in the association is free and includes an e-newsletter.

 www.legion.org/youthalumni

[AMERICANISM]

Boys Nation elects president

Michael Herbert of Arvada, Colo., was elected president of the 2011 American Legion Boys Nation, conducted at Marymount University in Arlington, Va., July 22-30. A senior at J.K. Mullen High School in Denver, Herbert intends to serve in the military.

"It is my honor to be elected Boys Nation president," said Herbert, who is Colorado's first Boys State senator elected to the position. "I look forward to the next three days, getting our bills passed and tackling some of our nation's prickliest problems. This program is second to none as far as civics, government and service to country."

Benjamin Attia of Hockessin, Del., was elected vice president. A senior at the Charter School of Wilmington, Attia plans to become an attorney.

"It was really just a humbling experience to see so much support from the senators," Attia said. "I am very honored to be able to serve the senate, the Legion and the country. My job is to make sure the senate is running smoothly and to help push the agenda along, and I think that is something I can do very well."



Michael Herbert is the first senator in Colorado Boys State history to be elected Boys Nation president. Charles Tucker

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James V. Carroll

LEGION BASEBALL

MINNESOTA TEAM WINS 2011 LEGION WORLD SERIES

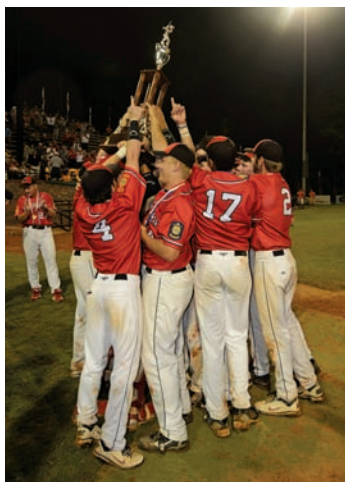
After 13 nail-biting innings, Edén Prairie, Minn., overcame its 2010 Legion World Series championship loss to Midwest City, Okla., by edging Tupelo, Miss., 5-4 to capture the 2011 crown – the first contested at the new permanent site of the World Series, Keeter Stadium in Shelby, N.C.

"This just feels great," center fielder Danny Blasy said. "I can't believe we pulled it off."

Edén Prairie defeated Las Vegas 2-1 during Game 14 on Aug. 16, then turned around to play the championship game against Tupelo. The Central Plains regional champs ended a 4-4 tie in the top of the 13th inning with the decisive run coming from first baseman Tyler Peterson. Tupelo pitcher Ben Hudspeth walked Peterson, who advanced to third on a fielding error by second baseman Kirk Roberts. Edén Prairie's Jordan Smith stepped up to bat, and the left fielder's RBI groundout brought Peterson across home plate for the winning run.

"This is the best feeling of my life," Peterson said. "Last year was such a disappointment. Coming in today, we just knew we were not losing. We were not going home again like that. We are taking this one home for us."

Tupelo had a strong chance to make a comeback at the bottom of the 13th with singles from Cody Shrewsbury and Tyler Moore, but Edén Prairie's defense held up. Tupelo also had a 4-3 lead until the eighth inning, when Edén Prairie shortstop Blake Schmit scored to tie the game.



James V. Carroll

The doubleheader kept Edén Prairie on the field for 22 total innings, but the team persevered to win the championship in front of more than 5,800 fans at Keeter. It was a great victory for Edén Prairie and head coach Scott Hackett, who said the team lacked tough defense in 2010, an asset on which they pride themselves. This time, they succeeded.

"Last year was pretty heartbreaking for a lot of them, and it was their goal to get back here," Hackett said. "I can't say enough about the group of guys we coach. They are just phenomenal kids."

At an awards ceremony, both teams received trophies and World Series banners, with some players receiving individual honors. Edén Prairie's Blake

Schmit was named George W. Rulon Player of the Year and also took home the Click Cowger RBI Award. Teammate Tony Skjefte received the Rawlings Big Stick award, and Tupelo's Brandon Woodruff received the James Daniel Jr. Sportsmanship Award.

For the first time, all 15 games of the Legion World Series aired live on ESPN3.com. And the number of fans who came out to Keeter to support the eight regional champions made history. During Game 9 on Aug. 14, the World Series reached a record total paid-attendance crowd of more than 60,000, beating the record set in Spartanburg, S.C., 75 years ago. After the championship game, the number of fans had climbed by another 26,000, for a total of 86,000.

– Cameran Richardson



*Larger than actual
size of 30.6 mm*

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[ECONOMICS]

Take advantage of no-cost business assistance

For veteran business-owners, most basic assistance needs are free. Business startup, business-plan writing, basic contracting, marketing, networking, business development, growth, and similar types of help can all be found at no cost.

More detailed assistance ranges in cost from free to thousands of dollars, and the cost isn't always a qualifier of substance or quality. Services you should expect to eventually pay for might include advanced state or federal contracting assistance, on-site

consulting assistance, in-depth turnaround assistance, employee background and security-clearance investigations, legal assistance and accounting.

Veterans programs continue to multiply, and a few free and low-cost programs include:

- **Veterans Business Outreach Centers,** 1.usa.gov/vetcenter
- **SBA Office of Veterans Business Development,** www.sba.gov/vets
- **Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities,** whitman.syr.edu/ebv
- **Women Veterans Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship,** whitman.syr.edu/vwise
- **National Center for the Veteran Institute for Procurement,** nationalvip.org
- **Center for Veterans Enterprise,** www.vetbiz.gov
- **Southwest Veterans' Business Resource Center,** wherecommunitiesserveveterans.org
- **Inc./Joining Forces Military Entrepreneurs,** inc.com/militaryentrepreneurs
- **National Veteran-Owned Business Association,** navoba.com
- **Veteran and Military Business Owners Association,** vamboa.org
- **Veterans Business Network,** veteransbusinessnetwork.com
- **Veteran Franchises,** www.veteranfranchises.com
- **Military.com,** military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/veterans-in-business

Also, every government agency has an office specifically established to help small businesses get work with their agency. These are usually called the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization – www.osdbu.gov/members.html – or simply the Office of Small Business Programs. All have veteran-business programs; some have more robust programs than others, but they all offer valuable information and host free or inexpensive veterans-outreach events.

Louis J. Celli is CEO of the Northeast Veterans Business Resource Center. Readers can send questions for "On Point" to lcelli@nevbr.org.



[MEMORIAM]

WWII hero, Legionnaire passes away at 89

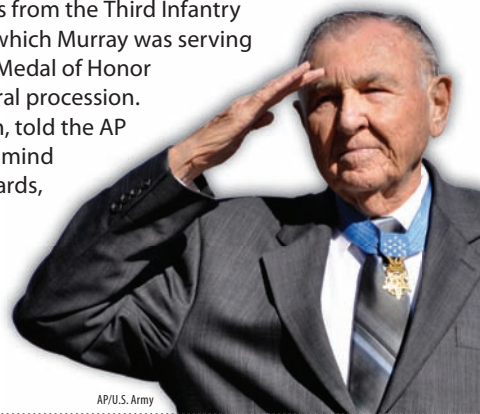
Col. Charles Murray, who received the Medal of Honor for single-handedly stopping an attack on U.S. troops by 200 Germans in World War II, died Aug. 12 at his home in Columbia, S.C. He was 89.

In December 1944, Murray served as commander of a company in eastern France. According to The Associated Press, he and his men were to take a bridge and build a roadblock. When Murray saw that German troops had pinned down an American battalion in a valley, he attacked on his own, killing 20 and wounding more before the enemy withdrew. A grenade sent shrapnel into his legs, but he refused aid until he had positioned his men and selected a location for a roadblock.

Along with the Medal of Honor, Murray also received three Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars and the French Legion of Honor for valor. He served in the Korean and Vietnam wars before commanding the Old Guard, which protects the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery. He was a member of American Legion Post 6 in Columbia.

On Aug. 17, soldiers from the Third Infantry Division, the unit in which Murray was serving when he earned his Medal of Honor citation, led his funeral procession.

Murray's son, Brian, told the AP that his father didn't mind talking about his awards, but always shared credit. "If you told him, 'Look what you did,' he would say, 'Look what all of us did,'" he said.



AP/U.S. Army

[MEMBERSHIP]

NEW POSTS

Andrew Pearson Post 117, Billings, Mont.

Chartered Aug. 22 (27 members)

Patrick Cleburne Post 402, Pacific, Mo.

Chartered Aug. 22 (16 members)

Post 106, Forks, Wash. Chartered Aug. 16 (15 members)

Cooper-Holmes-Scott Post 329, Hawkinsville, Ga.

Chartered Aug. 16 (15 members)

Post 2012, Lincoln, Ala. Chartered Aug. 16 (19 members)

Post 711, Ivins, Utah Chartered Aug. 3 (12 members)

I.N.V.E.T. Post 311, Indianapolis Chartered July 28 (15 members)

All Nations Warriors Post 402, Little Axe, Okla.

Chartered July 28 (17 members)

Tyrone Wagner Austin Post 282, Brownsville, Tenn.

Chartered July 21 (15 members)

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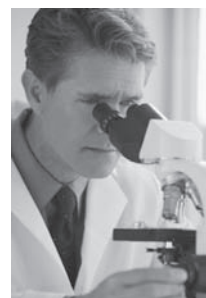
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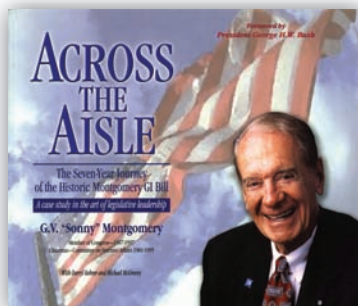
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[HISTORY]

Book chronicles seven-year journey of Montgomery GI Bill

This month, the Montgomery GI Bill turns 27. To mark the anniversary of its passage, a new book offers a detailed account of the legislative process behind the bill, which has been used by more than 2.6 million veterans.

The late Rep. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery started "Across the Aisle" in 2005 with Darryl Kehrer and Mike McGrevey. It covers the seven-year journey to update the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, widely considered the most important piece of social legislation in the nation's history. Harry Colmery, a past national commander of The American Legion, penned the original GI Bill, and the Legion was instrumental in its passage.

With more than 450 visuals and excerpts from the congressional debate, "Across the Aisle" offers a unique first-person perspective, following the Montgomery GI Bill from conception to passage.

A life member of American Legion Post 21 in Meridian, Miss., Montgomery was a veteran of World War II and the Korean War. He retired from the Mississippi Army National Guard with the rank of major general. In 1966, he was elected to the House of Representatives and held the office for seven presidential terms. Montgomery died in 2006.

Read more about "Across the Aisle" online:

www.upress.state.ms.us/books/1406



[PERSONAL FINANCE]

Guard against credit-card fraud

Nowadays, shopping doesn't necessarily mean a trip to the store or mall. Shopping over the phone or online is convenient, but can increase opportunities for fraud. With an estimated 600 million credit cards in American pockets and purses, fear of financial information being stolen is understandable.

As credit- and debit-card use increases, how can you better protect yourself? These tips offer a strong dose of preventive medicine.

- **Don't share your card information.** This should go without saying, but the importance of keeping your personal information private cannot be overstated. Your PIN and security code are two things that stand between you and the bad guys. Don't write them down; memorize them.
- **Be careful when shopping.** Never give your card number over the phone unless you have called to place an order. When making purchases online, confirm that a merchant's website is protected by locating a lock-and-key symbol in the browser's status bar.
- **Keep your card in sight.** This can be difficult, particularly at restaurants. But try to keep a close eye on your card and its whereabouts.
- **Review transactions.** Stay on top of your account activity. This is a quick way to detect fraudulent activity early.

- **Review credit reports.** These provide an at-a-glance indication if there are accounts established by an unsavory third party. You can get a free report annually from each of the credit agencies at www.annualcreditreport.com.
- **Create alerts.** Set up warnings if spending limits you've set are exceeded on credit and debit cards.

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& J.J. MONTANARO

Your bank can send text alerts if you spend more than the limit. You can also set up fraud alerts.

- **Avoid being "skimmed."** Skimmers are devices used to read credit-card information. According to *Consumer Reports*, equipment may be set up at ATMs, gas stations, restaurants and other retailers to capture your magnetic strip and keypad strokes. Check before you swipe.
- **Know what you're carrying.** Make copies of all the cards you carry. If you're a pickpocket's target, you'll have a jump on reporting the crime.

No defense is fail-safe, but staying aware and vigilant goes a long way in limiting financial, emotional and time-consuming damage.

June Lantz Walbert and J.J. Montanaro are certified financial planners for USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for them online. www.legion.org/financialfootlocker

[EDUCATION]

Veterans free to apply for federal financial aid



Q: Will I be able to receive federal financial aid when I enroll in college?

A: Veterans education benefits are not considered in determining eligibility for federal financial aid (the question has been removed from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, form). Every state/school sets its own policies for determining how veterans education benefits affect state and local aid. I strongly encourage all veterans to apply for federal financial aid, because many qualify for additional educational funds such as Pell Grants.

Valerie Vigil is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona. Send GI Bill questions to her by email. askvalerie@legion.org

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[PERSONAL COMPUTING]

Free vs. fee in the digital age

BY REID GOLDSBOROUGH

One of the most interesting dynamics in the digital world is the interplay between goods and services that you pay for and those you get for free. We've seen free PCs, free software, free Internet access and free websites.

As the old saying goes, you get what you pay for, and almost always there's some price to pay for something that is ostensibly free. That price typically takes the form of substandard quality, more or less intrusive advertising, or compromised privacy.

Still, the ethos of free has a strong tradition and moral underpinning among users of personal computers, other digital devices and the Internet, and whenever something that was once free starts to cost, a hue and cry can be heard across the land.

Microsoft's purchase of Skype last May has some of Skype's millions of users worldwide complaining about the possibility that the software giant may eventually start charging users to make voice and video calls to one another using their PCs, which is currently free (Skype calls to landline and mobile phones carry a small fee).

On one hand, these worries have some basis. Microsoft paid a whopping \$8.5 billion for Skype, making this its most expensive acquisition. Microsoft has more than enough cash for it, but Skype lost more than \$7 million last year.

On the other hand, Microsoft has kept other acquisitions free to users, leveraging them to help support the prices of its core products, Windows operating system and Office suite of software programs. Here's predicting that Skype will continue to be available separately, for free, while also being integrated into existing Microsoft products.

Another interesting development in the free-vs.-fee arena is the emergence of charges for networking services that give users more than what they get for free from giants such as Facebook and Twitter. One such service is Ning, which lets people and organizations create their own social-networking sites.

Users can customize the look of their site, accept or reject particular types of members based on profile questionnaires, control what's shared among members, and even optionally charge member fees and incorporate advertising. Fees for setting up a Ning site range from \$2.95 per month for a "mini" site to \$49.95 per month for a "pro" site with unlimited members and premium add-ons.

The roiling world of publishing is another area where feathers are being ruffled by change and money. In March, the largest U.S. metropolitan newspaper, *The New York Times*, started charging fees to frequent visitors of its

website who aren't also subscribers of the paper's print version.

Anyone will still be able to read up to 20 articles per month for free. More than that will cost, beginning at \$15 per month. Not all visits are included in the 20-article limit. If you access an article through search sites such as Google or social-networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, that's a freebie, though Google searchers are limited to five articles per day.

The *Times*, like many companies on the Web, is trying to come up with creative solutions that retain visitors while increasing revenue. In explaining its

change, Arthur Sulzberger Jr., chairman of The New York Times Co., said, "The challenge now is to put a price on our work without walling ourselves off from the global network, to make sure we continue to engage with the widest possible audience."

Hard numbers aren't yet publicly available, but one dedicated *Times* reader said that the number of online reader comments about articles seems to be down, likely indicating fewer online readers.

As much and as loudly as some users complain about any movement from free to fee, others argue that it benefits society as a whole. In a recent blog post at Open Forum, run by American Express, one participant spelled out various reasons he felt that "free is hurting us all."

Free content isn't valued by readers the same as paid content, says John Jantsch, founder of Duct Tape Marketing, a small-business market-consulting firm. When content is free, it's more likely that content producers will "simply slap something together."

When users pay for content, Jantsch feels that there's a better chance for building a loyal community around it. It's likely that in the future, some digital offerings will remain free. Some, to the delight of many, will become free. But an increasing percentage, it seems likely, will cost.

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book "Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway."
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20th Gen Hosp (Assam, India, 1943-1945), Robert Chain, (717) 355-6636
30th Inf Rgt Hvy Mortar Co (Fort Benning, GA, 1953-1955), Dick Lester, (860) 887-7566
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121st Avn Co "Vikings" (Soc Trang, Vietnam), Walt Dallenbach, (609) 395-7963, waltallenbach1@comcast.net
320th AEW (Seeb North AB, Oman, Sept-Dec 2002), AEF Cycle 5/6 All Units, Joel Novak, (508) 248-6939, noavkleboeuf@charter.net
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TAPS

Clifford T. Gardner Jr., Dept. of Rhode Island. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2003-2006.
Joseph W. Grahame, Dept of West Virginia. Dept. Cmdr. 2004-2005, and Nat'l & Homeland Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1986-1987 and 1995-2011.
K.W. Ohl, Dept. of Indiana. Nat'l Vice Cmdr. 1993-1994, Dept. Cmdr. 1985-1986, Nat'l

Americanism Cncl. Memb. 1982-1983, Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1983-1990, 1999-2000 and 2001-2006, Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1982-1993 and 1994-2003, Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1993-1994 and Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Memb. 2003-2009.

Gordon K. Richmond Sr., Dept. of Washington. Dept. Cmdr. 1996-1997, and Nat'l Naval Affairs Cmte. Memb. 1987-1990 and 1996-1999.

Clarence Walton, Dept. of West Virginia. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1998-2006.

Byron W. White, Dept. of Alabama. Nat'l Vice Cmdr. 2006-2007, Dept. Cmdr. 2004-2005, Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1999-2000 and 2009-2011, Nat'l Trophies, Awards & Ceremonials Cmte. Memb. 2003-2004, Nat'l Trophies, Awards & Ceremonials Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2004-2006, and Nat'l Sec. Cmsn. Memb. 2007-2011.

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A MAN drove his car into a ditch on a quiet country lane. Fortunately, a farmer passed by with a horse.

"Could your horse pull my car out of the ditch?" the driver asked.

"Buddy's a big, strong horse," the farmer replied. "We'll see what we can do."

The farmer hitched Buddy up to the car and said, "Pull, Samson, pull!"

Buddy didn't move an inch.

The farmer said, "Pull, Troy, pull!"

Again, Buddy didn't move an inch.

Finally, the farmer yelled, "Pull, Buddy, pull!" And the horse effortlessly pulled the man's car out of the ditch.

The driver was grateful, but mystified. "Why did you keep calling your horse by the wrong name?"

"Well, you see," the farmer replied, "Buddy is blind, lazy, and a bit stupid. If he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try."

A LITTLE GIRL got into a fight with her friend at Sunday School. The teacher reprimanded her, and said, "It was Satan who suggested to you that you pull your friend's hair."

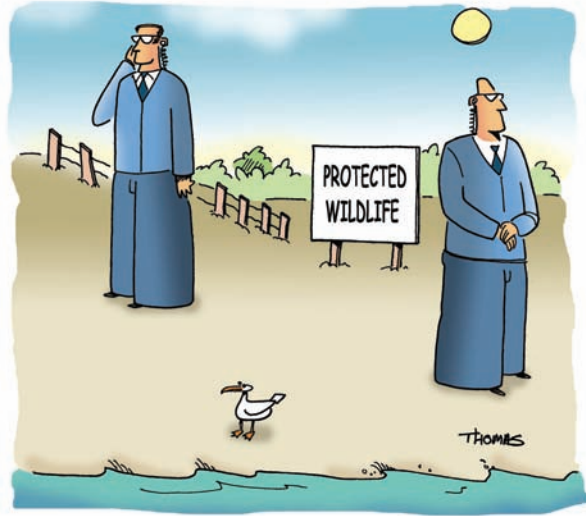
"Maybe," the girl replied. "But kicking her in the shins was entirely my idea."

WHAT HAS four legs, is big, green, and fuzzy, and if it fell out of a tree, would probably kill you?

A pool table.



"It might be easier to tell you what *is* working."



"Ninety percent of the universe is dark matter. Why aren't we taxing it?"

A NEWLY MARRIED MAN asked his wife, "Would you have married me if my father hadn't left me a fortune?"

"Honey," the woman replied sweetly, "I'd have married you no matter who left you a fortune!"

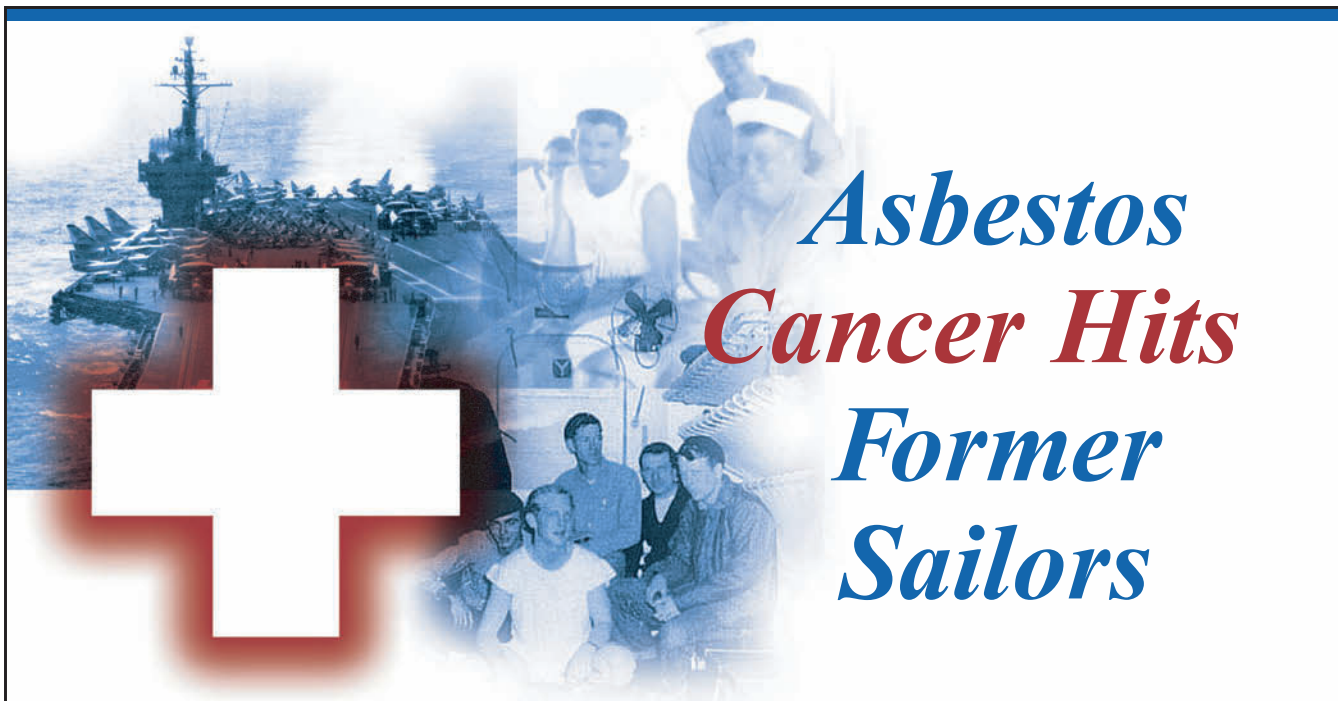
A LARGE COMPANY conducted a series of training and safety seminars for its employees.

"Does anyone know what the speed limit is in our parking lot?" the safety officer asked the crowd of employees.

A long silence followed, then one of them spoke up. "That depends," a woman said. "Do you mean coming to work or leaving?"

"ACCORDING TO A RECENT SURVEY, kids are receiving an average of 40 cents less from the tooth fairy. That's right, the economy is so bad that even make-believe people are feeling the pinch."

— Conan O'Brien



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